100% OFFICIAL CONTENT

Dungeons & Dragons

SCUTTLECOVE: CITY OF CHAOS

DUNGEON

BONUS POSTER MAP INSIDE

ISSUE 146 · MAY 2007

SPAWN OF SEHAN

PART TWO OF THE NEW CAMPAIGN ARC

CRUSH THE CRIMSON FLEET!

paizo publishing

DarcKnyght

ALL-NEW DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ADVENTURES FEATURING:

DEMONIC PIRATES › YUAN-TI › SHAVED HARPIES

WOLFGANG BAUR'S DUNGEONCRAFT › DOWNER › VOLCANOES

ISSUE #146 MAY 2007 VOLUME 21, NO 5

DUNGEON

paizo.com/dungeon

Publisher: Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief: James Jacobs
Senior Art Director: Sean Glenn
Art Director: Drew Pocza
Assistant Editor: Jeremy Walker
Assistant Editor: James Lafond Sutter
Advertising & Marketing Director: Joshua J. Frost
Production Director: Jeff Alvarez
Prepress Manager: Kelly O'Brien
Circulation Director: Pierce Watters
For Wizards of the Coast: Rich Redman and Rob Watkins

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Peter Bergting, Julie Dillon, Tomas Giorello, Kyle Hunter, Robert Lazzaretti, Warren Mahy, UDON (with Chris Stevens and Kevin Yan), Chris West, Ben Wootten

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS
Wolfgang Baur, Russell Brown, B. Matthew Conklin III, Ashavan Doyon, Tom Ganz, Stephen S. Greer, Stefan Happ, Richard Pett, F. Wesley Schneider

PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC
2700 Richards Road, Suite 201
Bellevue, WA 98005-4200

Chief Executive Officer: Lisa Stevens
Corporate Accountant: Dave Erickson
Technical Director: Vic Wertz
Director of Operations: Jeff Alvarez

Dungeon May 2007, Volume 21, Number 5 (ISSN# 0890-7102/ USPS 0002-005) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200, United States of America. Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA 98009-9998 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Dungeon*, Paizo Publishing LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200.

Ride Along Enclosed

No part of this magazine may be reproduced (except for review purposes) without the prior written consent of the publisher. Material published herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Paizo Publishing, LLC, its employees, or its editorial staff, who are not liable for opinions expressed herein. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. Trademarks related to the Dungeons & Dragons brand, including *Dragon*, *Dungeon*, and D&D are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and are used under license from Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a division of Hasbro, Inc.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO
Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200.

©2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

BACK ISSUES: **paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060.

SUBSCRIPTIONS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Contact Paizo Publishing at **subscriptions@paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060.

Although we accept subscriptions to prison addresses, delivery is subject to the discretion and/or whim of prison personnel. If you have not received a magazine or premium, please consult with your Mail Room authorities. This publisher is not responsible for non-delivery.

ADVERTISING: Contact *Dungeon*'s Advertising & Marketing Director, Joshua J. Frost, at (425) 289-1345. All ads are subject to approval by Paizo Publishing, LLC, which reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason. Advertisers and/or agencies of advertisers agree not to hold Paizo Publishing, LLC liable for any loss or expense from alleged wrongdoing that may arise out of the publication of such advertisements.

DISTRIBUTION: National and international distribution is provided by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: (201) 634-7400. Fax: (201) 634-7499.

OPEN GAME CONTENT: Unless otherwise noted, this Paizo Publishing, LLC product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 System License, please visit **wizards.com/d20**.

Printed in the U.S.A.

SAVAGE TIDE ADVENTURE PATH

42 SERPENTS OF SCUTTLECOVE
Richard Pett
The *Sea Wyvern* sets sail for a city whose streets are more savage than the darkest jungle of the Isle of Dread. Scuttlecove awaits! A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 15th-level characters.

ADVENTURES

14 ESCAPE FROM MEENLOCK PRISON
Tim and Eileen Connors
What was supposed to be a simple prisoner transfer grows complicated when the PCs arrive at a prison that's recently come under new management. A D&D adventure for 1st-level characters.

26 SPAWN OF SEHAN
Tom Ganz, Stefan Happ, Stephen S. Greer, B. Matthew Conklin III, and Ashavan Doyon
Within an ancient necropolis a pool of alien slime grasps the minds and bodies of the people of Exag with wispy tendrils of madness. Those transformed by its power invariably seek the crypt, but what fell power draws them there? Part two of the Seeds of Sehan campaign arc, this is a D&D adventure for 9th-level characters.

76 BACKDROP: SCUTTLECOVE
James Jacobs
Home to murderous pirates, decadent druglords, merciless slavers, cannibalistic monks, and worse, the vile streets of Scuttlecove wait to claim their newest victims.

ON THE COVER

Tomas Giorello brings us Harliss, our favorite pirate captain from the Savage Tide Adventure Path.

CARTOONS

25 The Portent
96 Downer

COLUMNS

6 Editorial
8 Prison Mail
86 Gamer Guide
88 Dungeoncraft
98 Map of Mystery

CAMPAIGN WORKBOOK

92 The Cast
94 The Journey

"The thing came abruptly and unannounced; a daemon, rat-like scurrying from pits remote and unimaginable, a hellish panting and stifled grunting, and then from that opening beneath the chimney a burst of multitudinous and leprous life—a loathsome night-spawned flood of organic corruption more devastatingly hideous that the blackest conjurations of mortal madness and morbidity."

H.P. Lovecraft
"The Lurking Fear"

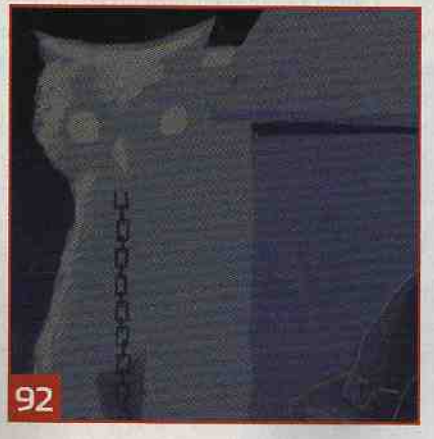
DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 6/30/07.

RPGA NETWORK

Drop by rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:

Escape from Meenlock Prison (146MP1DN)
Spawn of Sehan (146SP1DN)
Serpents of Scuttlecove (146SS1DN)



LET THE KID TALK

As the youngest editor at Paizo, I take a fair amount of flak. Most of the other editors were gaming before I was born, and people are constantly quoting classic sci-fi and fantasy movies, only to walk away in disgust when it's pointed out that *Ghostbusters* and I were released in the same year. Yet as a result, I frequently find myself designated the office's Voice of Youth, and with that in mind I feel there are a few issues that need to be addressed.

First off, hack-and-slash is dead. As far as I'm concerned, once *Diablo* hit, it was all over, and further videogames have just nailed that coffin tighter. When it comes to grinding, looting, and leveling, no DM in the world can compete with legions of programmers and graphic artists. Sure, it can still be fun to sit around a table and wade through a tide of skeletons with your friends... but some people enjoy driving Model Ts and building ham radios. That doesn't make them any less obsolete.

This by no means adds up to the death of RPGs, however. On the contrary—now more than ever, people are growing bored with straightforward number-crunched statistics and focusing on the roleplaying side of things. What the gamers of tomorrow want is story, and if it's hard-and-fast evidence you're after, you need look no farther than the pages of DUNGEON. While old-school dungeon crawls like Maure Castle remain popular, there's a new guard of authors—people like Nick Logue and Rich Pett—who are fast becoming fan favorites, not because of their twisted monsters and traps (though they have plenty), but because they deliver rich, intricate worlds with distinct flavors and interesting NPCs. Chris Wissel's "Diplomacy" in issue #144 is an extreme example, and one that's pulled off admirably. With only two combats and a handful of skill checks, he manages to put together one of the most engaging adventures of the year. Even in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, with its demons and dinosaurs, the character people seem to talk about the most is the foppish Avner Meravanchi. The fluff, it seems, is quickly outweighing the crunch.

This shift toward story isn't the biggest example of D&D's generation gap, either—gaming culture itself is changing, and I don't think it's going too far to say that we're seeing the final days of the gamer geek.

That's right, I said it: nerddom is dying out, and I couldn't be happier.

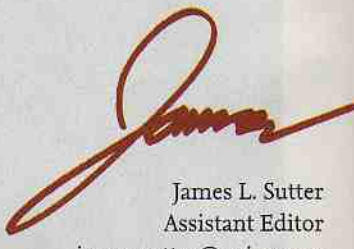
It sounds crazy, but look around you. Growing up, I was taught by my geek forebears that the only place to find other gamers was your local game store, and maybe play-by-mail or IRC chatrooms. Gamers were their own breed, with their own language (some things never change) and a mutually antagonistic relationship with the rest of society.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I reached college and suddenly found myself surrounded by a sea of happy, successful gamers. Nostalgic, campus-wide Goldeneye tournaments, LARPing on the Quad, and Assassins in the classrooms—all without shame or stigma. Sure, there are still plenty of us who live in exile, but with each year it seems increasingly self-imposed. Stereotypes are breaking. My current gaming group, for instance, consists of a lawyer, a geneticist, a teacher, a programmer, an engineer, and the ubiquitous game designer—all socially adept and (gasp!) romantically successful. What happened?

In short, society came to us. *Halo 2* invaded every frat house in America. Peter Jackson brought the *Lord of the Rings* into every living room. With a larger population than the average nation, *World of Warcraft* made elves and druids standard water cooler chatter in the workplace. As each successive wave of children grows up having never known a world without *Final Fantasy*, the fundamental definition of what it is to be a geek weakens. Even if many of the new recruits stick with video games, the fact remains that "MMO" is meaningless without the RPG. Here in Seattle, nerds are quickly becoming associated with brains, cash (thanks, dot-com boom!), and indie music. And bit by bit, people are coming out of the RPG closet.

Of course, many of you may disagree with my assessments, but hey—that's what "Prison Mail" is for. And it's entirely possible that I haven't a clue what I'm talking about.

After all, what do I know? I'm just a kid.



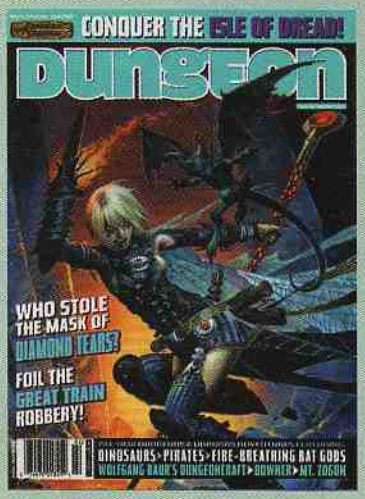
James L. Sutter
Assistant Editor
james.sutter@paizo.com

Tell us what you think of this issue.

Write to: Prison Mail, Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200 or send an email to dungeon@paizo.com.

Check out the *Dungeon* messageboards at paizo.com/dungeon

DUNGEON #143


CONQUER THE ISLE OF DREAD!
DUNGEON
WHO STOLE THE MASK OF DIAMOND TEARS?
FOIL THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY!
DINOSAURS • PIRATES • FIRE-BREATHING BAT GODS
WOLFGANG BAUR'S DUNGEONCRAFT • DOWNER • MT. ZOGON

Although the talented Mr. Wayne Reynolds designed all 11 of our iconic adventurers, issue #143 was the first chance he had to paint one of them as the only subject of a cover. We should let him do that more often!

In this issue's first adventure, Christopher Wissel took us on a ride through Eberron on the lightning rail. And of course, since this is D&D, it doesn't take long for the monsters to show up.

At the other end of the issue, Nicolas Logue introduced us to the "Mask of Diamond Tears," an artifact with the power to call forth sinister duplicates of our heroes. Where's Captain Kirk when you need him?

The 700-lb. gorilla in the issue, though, was Stephen S. Greer and Gary Holian's installment of the Savage Tide Adventure Path. "Tides of Dread" opened and closed with pirates, but in the middle was a no-holds-barred exploration of D&D's oldest exotic wildland—the Isle of Dread! And the adventure didn't end when you came back from the jungle to rest—the backdrop article on Farshore contained enough adventure hooks to fuel a campaign of its own!

Back issues of *Dungeon* #143 are available at paizo.com.

Prison Mail

In Defense of John

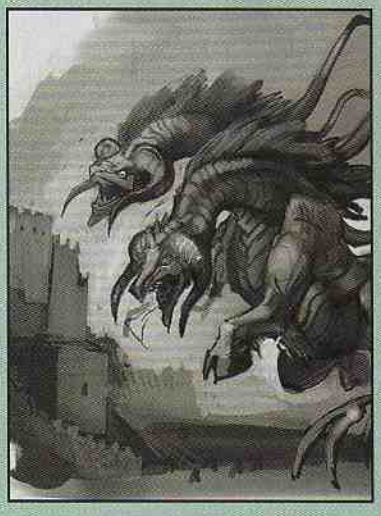
I would like to respond and support John Simcoe's letter that was printed in *Dungeon* #143. First, if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Simcoe has been published in *Dungeon* magazine at least twice, starting with "Chasing The Snake" back in *Dungeon* #105. Why do I mention this, you might ask? It's simple—he's not just some religious crank with an axe to grind, but a serious role gamer who understands and loves the game. *Dungeon* magazine does not just print articles from anyone, there has to be a certain something that makes them special. John Simcoe has it.

Secondly, there are other conservatives, Christians, and those who are both, that play D&D. This may be hard to believe, but it is true. We are not a majority, but I think that we represent enough of the fan base that if we picked up our dice and left (which I hope that other conservatives and Christians will not), it would be noticed. We are not asking that you limit content, simply redo the covers a little bit so that we do not have to take more heat than we already do. It is not easy to explain to loved ones, especially children or young adults, about the complexities and choices of RPGs when cover art slaps them in the face, makes them uncomfortable, or is frightening. Please realize that not all people that look at this magazine have the same mindset. I was showing my mother and my children something in that issue and they had a hard time getting past the cover.

Third, please do not patronize or pigeonhole gamers that are conservatives and Christians. Frankly, the tone of the editor's response was, "Oh the religious nuts are at it again!" No, we're not. Is it too much to ask though that we be accepted as members of the gaming community without checking our values at the door? The cover would not have been as much of a concern, I think, if it wasn't part of the issue that held the adventure path. This means that you have to buy it to follow the adventure path. I could go on further, but I would leave the main topic of this letter. We are not asking gamers to change for us, just lighten the load we have to bear by showing a little bit of restraint.

The editor said one more thing that needs to be responded to. That is that D&D suffered because of the names that demons and devils were changed to in second edition AD&D. This flies in the face of what is written in "30 Years of Adventure." I loaned out my copy so I do not have the page reference, but it said that 1996 was a great year for TSR in terms of game sales, one of the biggest that they had to date. What sank TSR was the hardcover book trade and the fact that they had to buy back all the unsold hardcovers, Dragon Dice, and what not. So TSR's demise wasn't because of a lack of interest in gaming or a choice of names, it was because they had taken a business gamble and lost.

NEXT MONTH IN DUNGEON



THE AUNDARIAN JOB

BY CRAIG SHACKLETON

Do you have what it takes to rob a bank in D&D? Find out in this EBERRON adventure for 5th-level characters.

DREAD PAGODA OF THE INSCRUTIBLE ONES

BY STEFAN HAPP, STEPHEN S. GREER, B. MATTHEW CONKLIN III, TOM GANZ, AND ASHAVAN DOYON

Atop a distant mountain peak, something monstrous plots dark deeds. The final installment of the three-part Seeds of Sehan Campaign Arc, this is a D&D adventure for 10th-level characters.

INTO THE MAW

BY ROBERT SCHWALB

In order to rescue a friend, the PCs must infiltrate a prison built by the Prince of Demons. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 15th-level characters.

OOPS!

Last month, we announced our fantastic *Monty Python's Spamalot* Grail Giveaway. Unfortunately, we printed the title incorrectly as Spamalot: the Musical. *Monty Python's Spamalot* Grail Giveaway ends April 30, 2007. For additional contest details, visit us online at paizo.com/grailgiveaway. For ticketing and tour information for *Spamalot*, visit them online at montypythonsspamalot.com. Those responsible for this error have been sacked.

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT

In closing, please be aware that your audience is not monolithic, comprises both sides of the social/political spectrum, and does have real lives outside of gaming that we deal with. Not one to simply address a problem, I have a solution. I think that the covers should stick to art from the main articles or show adventurers doing what they do. The cover art could tie in to articles that feature DUNGEON's iconic NPCs or new monsters with game stats and such (what is that Cleric of Wee Jas's name and stats?). Thank you for a great magazine, quality articles, and reading this missive.

Jim Alpeter
Via Email

The fact that John wrote that letter played a huge role in my decision to print it. "Racing the Snake" is one of my favorite adventures from my first year of working on DUNGEON, *and I have nothing but respect for John (both for his adventures and for his decision to write to us about #141's cover). I don't regard John as a "religious nut" at all, and I don't find it hard to believe that conservatives or Christians play D&D. I know some of them. Some of them work at Paizo. Some of them have written adventures for* DUNGEON. *My intent in responding to John's letter was not to ridicule him or Christianity, but to talk about why we chose what I knew would be a controversial subject for a cover.*

A Love Letter!

I just recieved issue #143 and I'm happy to be back on the Isle of Dread. It was the first adventure I faced after defeating the carrion crawler of my "sample" adventure.

I've only been reading DUNGEON for a few years—3rd edition lured me back to the game. I have to say, though, the quality of the issues has slipped since Erik Mona passed the torch. What's the deal, James? Turn off the *Warcraft* game! In the same issue you speak of losing players to video-games, you also write that you triple check for errors.

First of all, maybe concentrating on putting out a superior product would help hold on to gamers. Secondly, hello! How hard is it to count rooms? You'd think that somewhere in your triple-checking someone would have noticed the map for the lightning rail is missing an area #8 (you guys couldn't count that high?). OK, it is pretty easy to figure out where area 8 is. It's also easy to come up with stats for Lefty the pirate, should my players wish to do anything else but a Diplomacy check (a CR or an Ad-Hoc EL would have been nice here).

Even the artwork seems to be riddled with errors. (Not you, Wayne!). I don't have the EBERRON handbook, but unless the zakya rakshasa is different than the *Monster Manual* rakshasa, it seems that Vikari's hands were reversed. And Gendry's spider defender sure looks like a scorpion. Again, I don't have the EBERRON handbook, maybe that is how it is supposed to look, but then shouldn't it have a sting attack? And speaking of Gendry, that's a big ol' light mace he's got there. Looks bigger than Jozan's from the *Player's Handbook*, and it doesn't even come close to the light mace shown on page 120 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Clean it up guys, please! Not just because I love the game and your magazine, but also because you want $7.99 an issue!

C. Searing
Delano, CA

Good to hear from you, C. Searing! I don't have much room left to address your concerns, so I hope the following list does the trick.

1: Missing map tags are frustrating. This one's a legitimate error, but as you point out, it's easy to tell where area 8 is supposed to be.

2: Lefty does have stats. All the Rat's End pirates do. Their stats are all the same, and they appear on page 38. (CR 2, by the way.)

3: As detailed in the EBERRON *campaign setting, zakya rakshasas do indeed have unreversed hands. They're weird that way.*

4: As mentioned on page 24, Gendry gave his spider defenders scorpion tails. They're purely decorative. Not sure why he did this. Maybe he's compensating for something.

5: Foreshortening makes that mace look larger than it actually is. If you don't buy that, make it a heavy mace in your game.

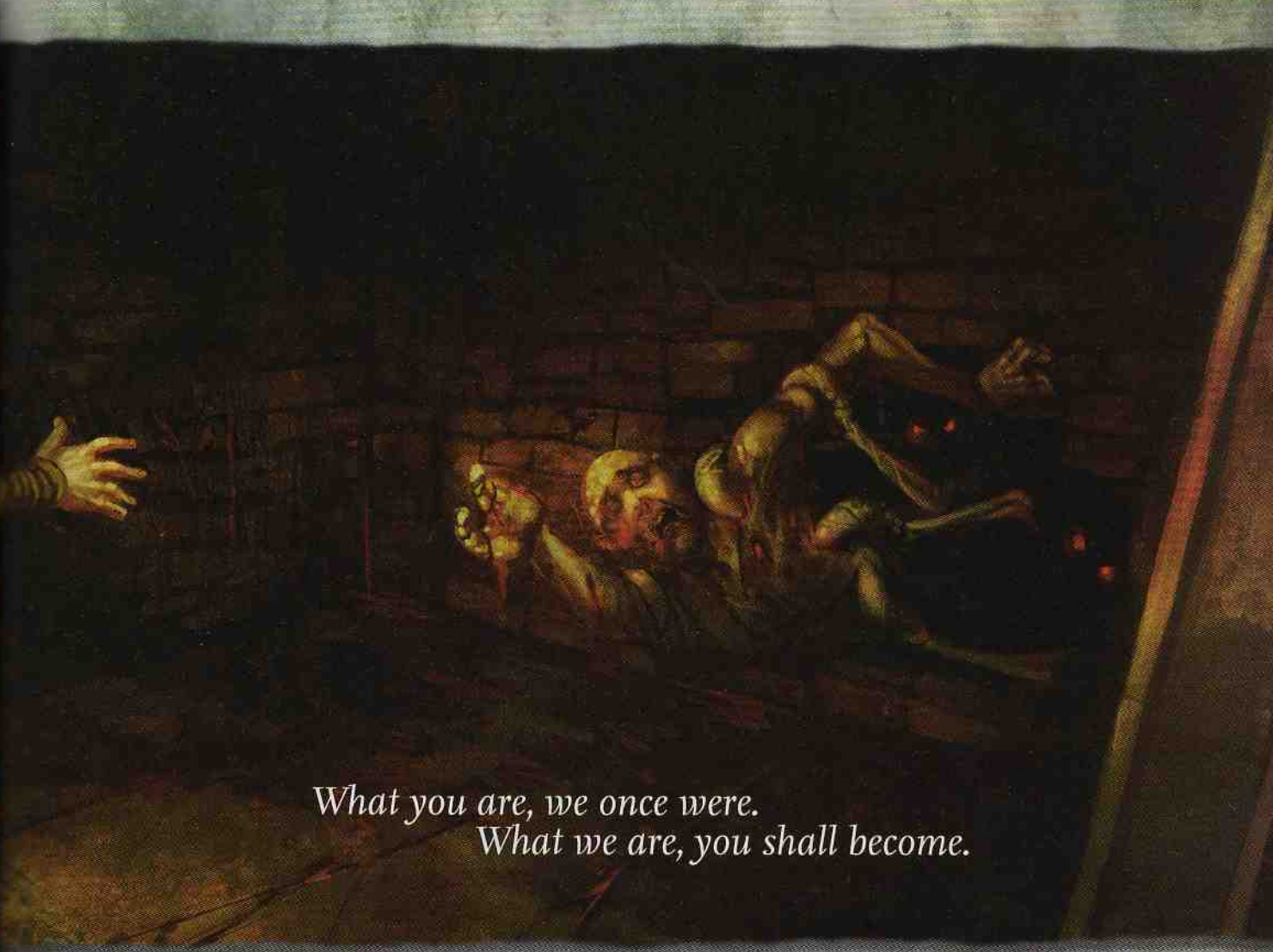
Anyway, judging by the letter you wrote to Erik in issue #354 of DRAGON, *perhaps the quality of* DUNGEON *hasn't slipped as far as you might think.*—James Jacobs

MT. ZOGON

Fans of DUNGEON's favorite evil druid have no doubt noticed Mt. Zogon's absence from this issue. Tony Moseley has elected to take a much deserved break for now.

-ESCAPE FROM-
MEENLOCK PRISON

BY TIM AND EILEEN CONNORS,
BY JULIE DILLON,
BY ROB LAZZARETTI,
ANY SETTING „ MID- LEVEL (1ST–5TH) „ DUNGEON CRAWL,



Deep in the forest, a winery-turned-prison houses criminals the aristocracy would like to forget, held more by the purses of the wealthy than by the power of the law. Yet when mind-twisting horrors break through the cellar floor, the resulting madness offers a team of seasoned cons the chance of a lifetime. Now the jailbirds masquerade as the prison's guards, setting up a lucrative scam, while beneath them the stones of the prison's foundation quaver with screams of those still trapped below.

"Escape From Meenlock Prison" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure designed for four 1st-level PCs, and fits easily into any campaign setting.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In a remote forest at the center of a long-abandoned winery, ancient vines grip an imposing chateau. Six years ago, an enterprising businessman and winemaker named Stanmer Parks converted the chateau into an independent prison and instituted himself as warden. Within a year, the prison was at maximum occupancy as various authorities remitted annual stipends to "disappear" political troublemakers. With free labor at his disposal and the assets of the estate at hand, Parks resurrected the winery. "Dissident's Wine" is now quite popular, particularly amongst the enemies of the incarcerated.

One week ago, a prisoner digging an escape tunnel unwittingly breached an underground maze of abandoned ankheg tunnels beneath the vineyards. Shortly thereafter, meenlocks entered the cellars through the tunnels and began wreaking havoc using their rend mind ability. The guards' attempt to repel the evil creatures was a profound failure, and in the ensuing chaos, a small faction of prisoners managed to wrest control of the prison.

The newly freed prisoners, led by accomplished confidence man Errol "Rook" Mir, sealed off the cellars and committed themselves to an audacious gambit. Posing as warden and guards, they have convinced a party of merchants to purchase the remaining wine inventory at great discount. When the merchants return with the gold, the imposters plan to simply walk out the prison's front door, rich and free.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Rumors of recent escape attempts prompt the city jailor to hire the PCs to relocate two prisoners from the chateau-prison to a city-run facility. When the PCs arrive at the chateau, the imposters, still awaiting the merchants' final payment, continue their charade. The "warden" slyly identifies two still-imprisoned comrades as the PCs'

SETTING THE MOOD

For horror-themed gaming sessions in particular, mood and ambiance is key. To help foster a sense of dread, try playing at night, with the lights low, or with the windows open. In the initial scene with Tarrow, consider pouring the players glasses of wine or juice as the old jailer makes his pitch. The initial elevator descent is also a perfect time to dim the lights even further or begin a soundtrack of creepy music.

Perhaps the best tactic of all is using the players' own metagame knowledge against them. Loudly rolling "secret" checks or asking for Spot and Listen checks when there's nothing to notice is a great way to convince your players that they're missing something—the D&D equivalent of feeling like you're being watched.

transferees and directs the party to fetch the prisoners themselves.

In the dimly lit cellars, the PCs are accosted by the panicked pleas of horrified prisoners desperate to escape their cells, as well as a few madmen who already have. Hidden meenlocks, referred to as "dark ones" by the inmates, sow discord, dissension, and fear by projecting disturbing phantasms into the PCs' minds. While collecting the false transferees, the PCs may discover the imposters' identities, either through numerous clues or by default when the cons trap them on the cell level. After escaping, the PCs must still locate and retrieve the actual transferees, as well as deal with the masquerading convicts.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The city jailor, a retired military man named Tarrow Shick, tasks the PCs with collecting two prisoners from the remote chateau. Tarrow may simply hire the PCs outright or offer them the task as part of a bail bond arrangement or in exchange for the parole of a friend or family member.

THE MISSION

The adventure begins at Tarrow Shick's modest cottage late on a crisp autumn evening. There, the 75-year-old **Shick** (LN male human aristocrat 2/fighter 3) seats them, uncorks a bottle of wine, and begins speaking while pouring a glass for each PC.

"I've never tasted this wine," he says. "It graces tables in social circles well above my own. This bottle was a gift passed down to me along with a task. Both of which I now share with you."

Tarrow takes a seat at the head of the table, sips from his glass, and sighs softly in appreciation.

"This is Dissident's Wine, so named for the prisoners forced to work the vineyard where it is produced. You see, the chateau at the center of that vineyard is also in the business of incarceration. It provides cells for hire, and we, like many authorities, use it for persons requiring... special consideration.

"At present, we are holding two prisoners there. As far as the public knows, these men have simply vanished, and that is how it is to remain. Unfortunately, rumors of recent escape attempts have undermined my superiors' confidence in the chateau's security and they have demanded the prisoners' transfer.

"I need someone to travel to the chateau and collect our two prisoners in secrecy. I remind you again that these men's names and deeds are not important. To the rest of the world, they don't exist. You'd be wise to remember that."

Tarrow hands the PCs a sealed release order for the prisoners, along with a pouch containing 500 gp in payment. He also gives them a map indicating the location of the chateau, approximately a fortnight away, and instructs the PCs to hood the prisoners on their return to conceal their identities. He refuses to answer any questions about the prisoners, and as soon as the deal is concluded he politely but firmly ushers the party out the door, shaking their hands as he does so.

Development: Tarrow warns the PCs not to break the seal on the release form, but anyone who does learns only the names of the transferees: Lyle Benedict and "Blessed of Pelor."

THE CHATEAU-PRISON

Two weeks ago the warden, primarily a savvy businessman, and the cheap laborers he hired as guards failed miserably to repel a meenlock incursion. As the guards opened cells in search of the elusive creatures, desperate prisoners overran them, beating them with broken chair legs and the guards' own weapons. Four quick-thinking inmates stripped the guards, piled them in a cell, donned their uniforms, and ascended from the cellar ready to catch further guards by surprise. They found none, and documentation in the warden's office showed none due for another five weeks. The four escapees, suddenly finding themselves in control of the chateau, locked down the cellar, trapping any surviving guards and other would-be escapees below.

Errol "Rook" Mir and two of his team of con men, Finneus Tack and Del Blackprize, were among the escapees. The three were imprisoned for running numerous highbrow, political confidence games and are rumored to have thrown elections, discredited guilds, and toppled powerful families.

After their escape, the con men convinced the fourth escapee, a strapping, callow youth named Lyle Benedict, to stand with them in an audacious gambit to become rich as well as free. Rook dressed as the warden and the three remaining men as guards. Their disguise fooled a small party of wine merchants, whom they convinced to purchase the remaining wine inventory at a significant discount. Three of the four merchants left the chateau to secure creditors for the large order and are expected to return any day now with the gold.

In the meantime they keep the remaining merchant, an obese hedonist named **Rolphus Gage** (N male human commoner 3), so drunk and happy that he hasn't questioned any eccentricities.

THE CON MEN: ERROL "ROOK" MIR, FINNEUS TACK, DEL BLACKPRIZE, AND SIMMOL REDTURN **CR 2**

Male human expert 3

NE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +2

Languages Common, Elven

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12
hp 13 (3 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft.
Melee shortspear +1 (1d6–1)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +1

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15
Feats Persuasive, Deceitful, Skill Focus (Bluff)
Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +10, Forgery +9, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +3, Sense Motive +8
Possessions leather armor, shortspear, guard uniform, 100 gp

Typical Prisoner: Lyle Benedict CR 1
Male human expert 2
N Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +2
Language Common

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10
hp 5 (2 HD)
Fort +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** +6

Spd 30 ft.
Melee club +2 (1d6+1) or unarmed +2 (1d3+1 non-lethal)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 12, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 10
Feats Alertness, Iron Will
Skills Diplomacy +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +7, Profession +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +2
Possessions makeshift club

ARRIVAL

Two six-foot-tall decorative stone pillars flank a wide dirt avenue that proceeds north for two hundred yards. On either side, thick fog collects in the depressed hollows of overgrown vineyards. An imposing stone building stands at the avenue's far end.

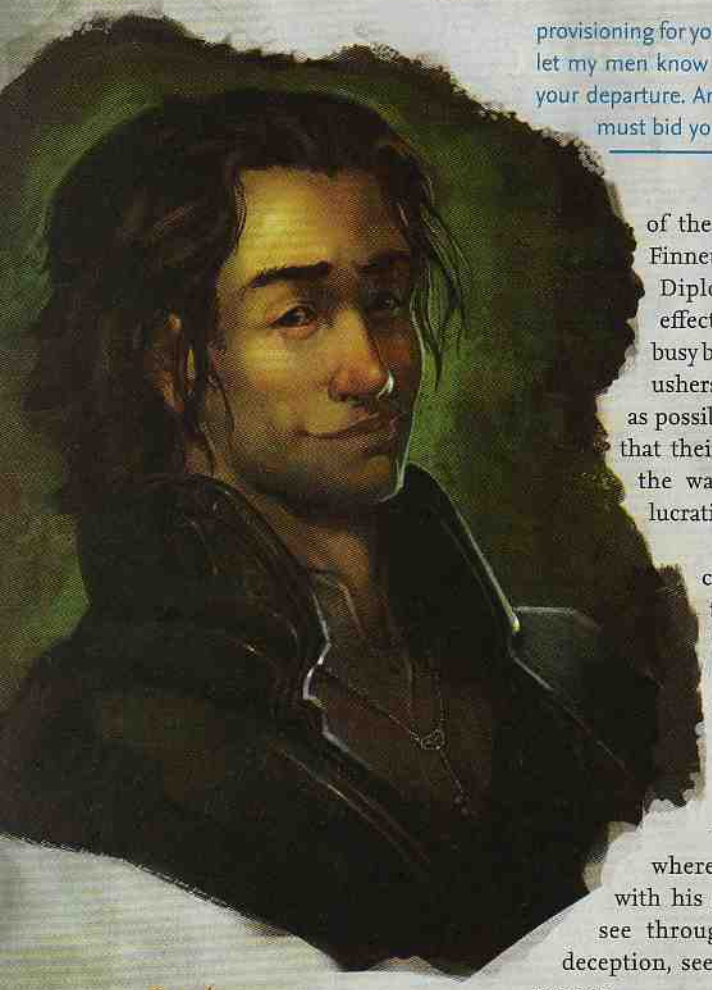
The dirt avenue loops into a wide circle before the enormous chateau. Three stories tall and at least 150 feet wide, the building is weathered but maintains an imposing presence. Ancient vines bite into its face, giving the overall appearance of a single stone block rooted to the earth by erupting veins.

Finneus Tack, an escapee imposter calling himself Mr. Fine, steps out of the front door at the party's approach. He is a handsome, clean-shaven man dressed in a gray uniform with epaulets on the shoulders. He politely but firmly demands the PCs identify themselves and their business. If presented with the official release form, Finneus welcomes them and brings them to Rook, who smokes cigars in the Warden's office with Rolphus the merchant.

MEETING THE WARDEN

Sitting behind a mahogany desk in this brightly lit and richly appointed office is a handsome dark-haired man. Opposite him, a well-dressed obese man reclines in an ornate, leather-padded chair. The fat man's laughter coils puffs of cigar smoke into the already foggy room. The man behind the desk rises from his seat and shakes hands with the PCs, then opens up the release form and reads over it thoughtfully.

A skilled con man, Rook instantly recognizes the release order as an opportunity. In addition to the three prisoners who escaped with him, two more of Rook's criminal associates remain locked in the cellars, and could prove useful in completing the scam. Though he's not about to risk his own neck to save them from the meenlocks, he's more than happy to let the PCs do it for him. After what he deems a reasonable pause, he places the note in a desk drawer and addresses the party.



Rook

"The documentation for the release of your two prisoners is in order. You've already met one of my men, Mr. Fine. He'll hand you off to Mr. Dee in the cellars. You'll forgive me when I say you must secure the prisoners yourselves—we are woefully understaffed at the moment, and my men are engaged in other, very important business matters."

At this the fat man nods and inclines his wine glass toward the party. The warden continues speaking as he turns and pulls back a tapestry above a fireplace behind him. Using a key on a chain around his neck, he unlocks a wall-mounted safe and removes two large keys from within, which he tosses to Finneus.

"Your prisoners are in the seventh and sixteenth cells on your right. If you require provisioning for your return to town, merely let my men know and it shall be awaiting your departure. And with that, I'm afraid I must bid you good day."

While Rook does most of the talking, both he and Finneus use their Bluff and Diplomacy skills to great effect, attempting to seem busy but nonchalant. Finneus ushers the PCs out as quickly as possible, insinuating quietly that their presence is keeping the warden from sealing a lucrative wine sale.

The 7th and 16th cells are not the cells of the PCs transferees—they are, in fact, the cells of Rook's still-imprisoned comrades. If the PCs survive liberating them, Rook plans to keep the party locked in the cellars where they can't interfere with his plan. Should the PCs see through their attempts at deception, see "The Showdown" on page 25.

Treasure: The wall safe contains 300 gp, keys to every lock in the cellar, and a ledger indicating the name and cell number of each prisoner, the reason for each man's incarceration, and the name and balance of the party funding the imprisonment. In the right hands, such political artillery could prove priceless.

Steel Wall Safe: 1 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 30; Break DC 30; Open Lock 28.

TO THE CELLAR

Finneus escorts the PCs past the double doors opposite the chateau's entrance and into a hall at the rear of the building. With the exception of the few rooms that the PCs pass through on their way in, nearly all the chateau's rooms are as neglected and tumbledown as this one.

Sporadic patches of plaster are all that remain on walls stripped to gray bricks and wooden slats. At the far end of the room is a fifteen-foot-tall empty cage made of iron bars. A metal chain rises from its solid metal top, threads through eyehooks across the ceiling and down the wall, and wraps around a wheel with a crank bar embedded in the floor. Mr. Fine walks over to the cage and opens its door with a rusty creak. "Your ride awaits," he says, producing the two keys. "Here are the keys—remember, they're the seventh and sixteenth cells on your right. Mr. Dee will meet you outside the cellblock hall. Once you have your prisoners, return here and give a holler." Mr. Fine bends down to the floor and, through a small hole covered in steel mesh, yells, "Party to transfer prisoners coming down, Mr. Dee." A faint echoing voice replies, "Right. Send 'em down."

Del Blackprize (aka Mr. Dee), whose voice seemingly replies from the cellar, is actually on the same floor as the PCs, calling through a similar hole in the floor at the front of the house. Though the elevator is only 5 feet square, Finneus encourages the whole group to squeeze in, as resetting the mechanism that raises and lowers it is both arduous and time-consuming.

If a PC declines to descend, Finneus advises honestly that, "It would be best if you all went down. The prisoners are not restrained in their cells, and you may be surprised how difficult it can be to subdue a desperate man." Further conversation is interrupted by Lyle Benedict, who steps into the hall just long enough to remind Mr. Fine to hurry up and return to his post. If the group still insists on splitting up, Finneus shrugs and acquiesces, showing those that remain aboveground to a nearby sitting room before going to find Rook. Together, the men agree to wait and monitor the newcomers, ambushing them if it appears they've caught on to the ruse.

DUNGEON FEATURES

Stanmer Parks hired a team of masons to adapt the cellar for incarceration. They bricked up a hallway to increase security and divided each eastern room into six stone cells. Piped fresh water drops through a fist-sized hole in the

upper corner of each cell's rear wall and collects in a shallow, wall-mounted stone trough before overflowing into a small drain in the floor.

The cellar has a flagstone floor and gray, stone walls that rise vertically for 5 feet before arching up into a barrel-vaulted ceiling 15 feet high at the center. Iron cell doors are rectangular, with built-in locks and 2-foot-square windows made of iron bars. All doors are locked unless otherwise noted. Closing a cell door automatically relocks it. *Continual flames* in the ceilings of areas 1–9 cast inconstant, mottled light due to hundreds of moths that crowd upon them. Bright illumination is reduced to the 5-foot square on the floor directly below them, and all else is dimly lit.

All prisoners have the same statistics as Lyle Benedict (page 17) unless otherwise noted.

Iron Cell Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock 25.

Wooden Double Doors: 3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 25; Break DC 25; Open Lock 23.

1. THE ELEVATOR

With an initial jolt and the clanking of chains moving over metal hooks, the cage wobbles and staggers in slow descent. Inch by inch, a dimly lit room is revealed, with two statues of frolicking satyers flanking a dark doorway and a long hall beyond. Wide wooden double doors stand to the west. Dust puffs out from below as the cage comes to rest on the cellar's flagstone floor. Overhead, the cage's ceiling seals tightly with the floor of the hall above.

Since the cage's door is the full height of the cage, it is impossible to open while between floors. Once lowered, iron bars built into the cage's ceiling snap into sockets in the floor above, locking the cage down until an operator above disengages them. A mechanism built into the door's pivot allows an operator to close the door from above. A tiny, lockable hatch in the cage roof allows the guards above to monitor the loading and unloading of prisoners below.

The elevator cage sits at the northern end of this long, dimly lit room. On the west wall stands a pair of wide wooden double-doors. In the center of the south wall, between stone statues of frolicking satyrs, the mouth of a dark doorway gapes.

Several barrels weighing a grand total of 1,000 pounds sit on the opposite side of the double-doors, preventing them from opening easily toward area 10.

2. BOTTLES

A five-foot-wide flagstone path connects dark doorways to the north and south of this hall. Twenty-foot-long wooden wine racks tower ten feet high on either side. Upon them, thousands of bottles caked in dried mud rest in rusty wire cradles.

Each of these racks is merely the innermost of a series of freestanding shelves spaced three feet apart and running parallel to the hall on either side. Near the doorways, a narrow space permits access to the avenue between them. A DC 13 Search check reveals padlocked double doors on the west wall. Though the doors open into area 11, a 500 pound shelf filled with bottles blocks access to the padlock.

3. PRISONER PROCESSING

Two chairs sit behind an old desk in front of a large tapestry gracing the south wall. Wide, padlocked double doors dominate the west wall. To the east is a door made of iron bars. A dark puddle shines in the center of the floor.

The tapestry depicts generals celebrating with bottles of dark wine, while piles of dead soldiers stain the battlefield behind them. A large cabinet rests against the wall beneath the tapestry.

The puddle is the blood of a disemboweled man dragged to area 4. An arcing smear leads from it through the slightly ajar eastern door. PCs making a DC 15 Listen check hear faint, stifled sobs from area 4a. Success by 5 or more makes out the whispered phrase "they're coming."

MINIATURE MARKET
LOWEST PRICES ON THE NET

D&D Miniatures at... 25%-35% off!

Free Shipping on all orders over $75!

We carry the largest variety of D&D miniatures on the web!

Booster packs and cases from every set including:

Harbinger, Archfiends, Giants of Legend and more!

We also buy & sell single figures!

Need Cash? Want to trade?

Visit our site & check out our complete buy/trade list today!

- Free Shipping on orders over $75!
- All orders ship out with in 24 hours (all inventory in stock, ready to ship)

MINIATURE MARKET
LOWEST PRICES ON THE NET
www.miniaturemarket.com

Treasure: Amongst clothes and prisoners' personal effects, the cabinet holds two sets of manacles, two *potions of cure light wounds*, a key controlling the elevator in area **12**, and the artificial leg of the prisoner in area **7a**. A DC 25 Search check of the leg reveals a cleverly concealed compartment in the top containing a pouch of *dust of disappearance*. A small key effective on all manacles in the prison is in a desk drawer.

Cabinet: Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 15; Open Lock DC 20.

4. THE BAIT

A five-foot-wide hall leads eastward into darkness. Three iron doors with two-foot-square barred windows stand at ten-foot intervals along both sides. The second door to the north is open. On the hall floor in front of it, a shirtless man lies covered in blood, his stomach torn open. He raises his head momentarily and smiles before being pulled violently into the cell by his own intestines.

The trail of blood from area **3** leads to the wounded man being pulled into area **4a**.

4A. THE ANGLERS (EL 2)

Stalked by meenlocks ever since escaping their cells, the three men in this cell have gone mad with fear and desperation. An hour ago, another escapee wielding a stolen guard's spear disemboweled one of them. The remaining two men are now prepared to reel him at the slightest sound, using the injured man as bait to catch the "dark ones" when they return.

Sitting cross-legged atop a cot in this cell, a dirty-faced man sobs. Coils of intestines sit in his lap. He weeps uncontrollably as he continues to reel in the disemboweled man by his gut.

Creatures: The feral-eyed second man leaps from his hiding place in the corner of the cell and attacks as soon as the party enters. The weeping man follows his lead, still crying. Unless coerced back to sanity by magical means, both men fight until dead or unconscious—in their diseased minds, the PCs are monsters.

A menlock hides in the cell across the hall. If it's spotted, it dimension doors away before the PCs confront it.

Typical Prisoner (2): hp 9; see page 17.

Tactics: The men attempt to seize the PCs' weapons to use against them. After two rounds, a meenlock hiding in the opposite cell uses its *rend mind* ability against a random PC, then flees to area **6** via dimension door. It creates a phantasm of a young girl skipping rope with the dying man's intestines.

5. BLOCKED VISION

Three cells line either side of this five-foot-wide prison block hall. The iron doors of the easternmost cells lie open, blocking the view beyond.

5A. THE PRETENDER (EL 1)

An unmoving prisoner lies face down in an awkward position upon his cot.

Creature: Werten Sape is a convicted murderer spared death by the enigmatic dying wish of his victim's mother, as well as an annual stipend paid by her estate. He heard the PCs coming and is playing dead. From outside the cell, a DC 20 Spot check notices his shallow breathing. The cell door is unlocked.

Werten Sape: hp 5; see page 17.

Tactics: If the PCs do not physically interact with Werten, he continues to feign death until the PCs enter area **7**. He then breaks into the cabinet in area **3**, steals the artificial leg to use as as a club, and hides in area **2** to attack the PCs the next time they pass. If Werten hits a target with the leg, the *dust of disappearance* hidden within bursts out and makes both him and the target invisible for 2d6 rounds.

5B. DEATH ROW

A sickly odor issues from a man lying in a fetal position on his cell floor. Dried bloody rags cap the stumps where his legs have been severed at the knees. As if in the midst of a nightmare, his eyes dart behind closed lids and his sweaty hair flicks from side to side.

Creature: While awaiting a public execution for a savage killing spree, Drallen Kale purposely encouraged gangrene in his feet in hopes the warden would transfer him to a hospital where it would be easier to escape. Instead, a surgeon (prisoner Nis Whitedress, commandeered from area **6a**) and four large men arrived with two quarts of whiskey and a saw. Amputation, the warden explained, would ensure Drallen lived long enough for his execution.

Drallen Kale: hp 5; Wis 0; see page 17.

6. MEENLOCK MEETING (EL 3)

This five-foot-wide hall passes two cells on the north and three on the south before turning north. An old desk and a broken chair sit at the turn.

Creature: PCs who make a DC 17 Spot check glimpse a poorly hidden meenlock lurking to the northeast.

MEENLOCK **CR 3**

LE Tiny aberration

Monster Manual II 146

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +4

Aura fear

Language telepathy (300 ft.)

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12

hp 18 (4 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +3 (1d2–2 plus paralysis)

Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** –7

Special Actions meenlock transformation, rend mind

Abilities Str 6, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 15

SQ dimension door

Feats Alertness, Track

Skills Hide +12, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +4, Survival +5

Fear Aura (Su) As a free action, a meenlock can produce a fear effect. Any creature within a 30-foot radius of the meenlock that fails a DC 14 Will save becomes catatonic from fear for 1d4+4 rounds. During this time, it rolls into a ball, hugs its knees, or simply stands in place, shivering and staring. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by that meenlock's fear aura for 24 hours.

Meenlock Transformation (Su) After three or more meenlocks touch a helpless humanoid or monstrous humanoid for 1d6 hours, all of the victim's ability scores drop to 1 (no saving throw). A *heal* or *greater restoration* spell at this point restores the creature to normal. In another 1d6 hours, the transformation is complete and the subject becomes a meenlock forever, losing all of its previous classes and abilities. At this point, only a *wish* or *miracle* can restore the victim. The subject of an incomplete transformation slowly returns to normal as his ability damage heals.

Paralysis (Ex) Any creature hit by a meenlock's claw who fails a DC 14 Fortitude save is paralyzed for 3d6 rounds.

Rend Mind (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a meenlock can project thoughts and suggestions into the mind of a single creature (range 300 feet). The target must make a DC 14 Will save or take 1d4 Wisdom damage and experience a mind-affecting phantasm.

Dimension Door (Su) Once every two rounds, a meenlock can produce an effect like that of a *dimension door* spell (60-foot range) carrying no additional weight.

Tactics: Using its rend mind attack against a PC, the meenlock projects a phantasm of a bald man with a third eye (Blessed of Pelor from area **7**) interacting with a second PC, preferably one whose name it has overheard. The bald man says, "We have the same initials," and after a pause, jumps with supernatural speed into the second PC's body.

While undiscovered, the meenlock continues to issue rend mind attacks with phantasms designed to sow discord and convince the PCs that one of their number is possessed or changing. If discovered, it uses its fear aura, then dashes under the cots of open cells in areas **4** and **5**, hoping to draw the PCs in, *dimension door* out, and lock them inside. The meenlock uses its paralyzing claw attack against a single separated PC.

When the battle ends, the meenlocks in area **9a** whisper a telepathic message to all PCs: "What you are, we once were. What we are, you shall become." The message quietly repeats in the PCs' heads for as long as they remain in the cellar and any meenlocks live.

6A. THE SURGEON

Creature: Though loyal surgeon Nis Whitedress saved the life of his liege's son, he left the boy crippled. The boy's mother incarcerated the surgeon to spare his life from the wrath of her husband.

Nis Whitedress: hp 5; LG; see page 17.

Tactics: With a bloody nose and arms stretched through his cell's window, Nis begs the PCs to free him before more "dark ones" come. If they free him, he is friendly and cooperative. Whenever Nis is within 20 feet of a live meenlock, his nose inexplicably trickles blood.

6B. TORTURE SURVIVOR

Creature: Ferinetty Sternic is a torture survivor, as evidenced by the seared stub where his left hand should be. Seeking

amnesty from a troubled land, his new home's politicians are holding him here while they decide whether they want the foreign policy trouble that accompanies him.

Ferinetty Sternic: hp 5; see page 17.

Tactics: Ferinetty pleads and weeps for the PCs to free him. If the PCs free Simmol (area **6c**), Ferinetty vehemently denounces him as evil.

6C. THE INSTIGATOR

A man with a streak of white through his thinning brown hair sits atop his cot with his face in his hands.

Creature: This is the home of the PCs' first false transferee, Simmol Redturn, an infamous instigator for violent extremist groups. Rook once overheard him speak of an abandoned gristmill nearby, and hopes he will lead them to this prospective hideout.

Simmol Redturn: hp 5; CN; see page 17.

Tactics: If the PCs free him, Simmol cooperates with the PCs fully until they reach the surface, keeping an eye out for any potential weapons. Once it becomes clear that the PCs cannot exit the cellar from area **1**, Simmol suggests the winery elevator in area **12**.

Though Simmol doesn't know anything beyond the fact that a few prisoners escaped, he's smart enough to keep his mouth shut and not question his good fortune. At the same time, he resents the fact that Rook left him to rot, and will not fight to protect him—at the first sign of trouble, he bolts for the woods, only attacking those who attempt to stop him.

7. HIGH SECURITY

Three cells on the north side of this hall face two on the south. Unlike the others, the front and side of the southeastern-most cell are built completely of iron bars, not stone. Inside, a thin, one-legged man with a few strands of long white hair stands facing the stone corner of his cell, his face hidden. Through the windows of the other cells, dark shapes shuffle and sob. Beyond this hall, through a dark open doorway, light flickers.

7A. JAILBREAKER

Creature: Teriam Trust, lifetime servant of a man named Aris Wellborn, clandestinely paid for his own incarceration in order to get into the prison and break his master out. Unfortunately, the guards foiled his plans when they confiscated his fake leg containing *dust of disappearance*.

Teriam Trust: hp 5; LN; see page 17.

Tactics: Teriam promises he can help them all escape if the PCs first free him and Aris. Unfortunately, Aris is already dead, starved to death in the cell east of area **4a**.

7B. PALADIN'S CHARGE

A bloody, vertical streak stains the front of this cell door. Inside, a tall, well-manicured man with black hair holds a ring of keys in his manacled hands.

Creature: Verin Syllk was sentenced to death for feeding his violent, amoral appetites. However, a well-respected paladin convinced the authorities to allow him the opportunity to redeem the man. The paladin presently pays for Syllk's incarceration and frequently visits to council and talk. Syllk feigns penitence.

Verin Syllk: hp 5; see page 17.

Tactics: Just before he was shivved to death, a guard dropped a key ring into Verin's cell in a desperate attempt to prevent escaped prisoners from freeing others. Verin asks the PCs to promise to free him from his manacles and cell in exchange for the key ring. If freed, Verin seizes every opportunity to claim a weapon and ensure his escape at the expense of all others.

Manacles: Hardness 10; hp 10; Break DC 26; Open Lock 25.

Development: The ring contains a key for every door in the cellar, though not for the elevator.

7C. FAMILY MATTERS

Creature: A week before the meenlock incursion, the real Warden Parks locked up his son-in-law, Oban Relks. It was to be a temporary lesson prompted by his daughter's accusations of an extramarital affair, but what started as a lesson has quickly turned into a nightmare for young Oban.

Oban Relks: hp 5; CG; see page 17.

Tactics: A thin and gawky man, Oban visibly fights off his fear as he divulges his simple story to convince the PCs that he doesn't belong here.

7D. BLESSED OF PELOR

Creature: Whether the man known as "Blessed of Pelor" is a prophet or heretic is the subject of fiery debate. High-ranking civil authorities avoided certain violence by secretly kidnapping and incarcerating him far from the conflict.

A palpable aura of calm surrounds **Blessed of Pelor** (NG male human cleric 5). A tattoo of a spiky sun sits above his nose like a third eye. Repeated rend mind attacks have reduced his Wisdom to 5, making it impossible for him to prepare or cast spells. PCs who succeed on a DC 15 bardic knowledge or DC 18 Knowledge (religion or local) check recognize him.

Tactics: When the PCs arrive, Blessed of Pelor stands lost in fruitless meditation, attempting to regain his spells. His wavering faith is steadied upon sight of the PCs, whom he takes to be Pelor-sent saviors. He asks the PCs to either free everyone or reinstitute the prison's standard safety and provisioning, refusing to leave his cell if they do not. He has taken vows of poverty and non-violence, and as such will not engage in combat.

Iron Bar Cell: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock 30.

8. RATS

Creature: Three cells face each other on either side of the hall. The open door of the southwestern cell partially blocks a dark doorway at the end. On the floor in the center of the hall, furry shapes squirm, crawl, and crowd atop a shrouded light source. Chewing sounds are muffled by the whispers of the four prisoners in the easternmost cells. Gripping the bars of their cell windows, they chant the phrase "big boys don't cry" in whispered unison.

The rats disperse when the PCs approach. The badly chewed body of a dead guard in a gray uniform holdsan everburning torch to his chest. He was particularly despised by the prisoners, who, now insane, repeat his mocking catchphrase.

Typical Prisoner (4): hp 9 each; see page 17.

Tactics: Treat these insane prisoners as permanantly confused (as the spell) if they are released.

8A. GUARDS

Four men lie stripped of outer garments on the floor of this cell. Although covered with hundreds of rat bites, they appear to have been bludgeoned to death by the broken chair legs lying next to them.

These are the dead guards whose uniforms the imposters stole.

9. MEENLOCK TRANSFORMATION

This hall dead-ends to the west after passing three cells on either side. The doors of the far two northern cells are ajar.

9A. THE WARDEN (EL 5)

Stanmer Parks, the real warden, survives as a helpless, drooling wreck of a man in the final stages of meenlock transformation. The PCs' presence in the cellar has interrupted the grisly transformation that began in this cell, and the meenlocks are pulling him through the prisoner-dug escape tunnel to area **13** to complete the process.

A low moan punctuated by clicks and grunts comes from behind the cot at the rear wall of this open cell.

The PCs must move the cot aside to see the source of the sound.

A misshapen humanoid head and pair of claws extend from a hole near the floor of the back wall. The head faces the floor and lolls from side to side. The claws impotently seek purchase on the sides of the hole.

A DC 15 Spot check notices that the pincer claws appear to be fused humanoid fingers. A DC 15 Sense Motive check gives the PC the impression that the pitiful creature is weakly trying to emerge from the hole. If the PCs interact with the creature, it lifts his head.

Slowly and feebly, the ulcerated head leans back and a twisted face rises. The brow is thick, raised, and furrowed. The eyes are sunken, pupilless pools of gray. Below an absent nose, a short muzzle of tall, mismatched teeth silently mouths words.

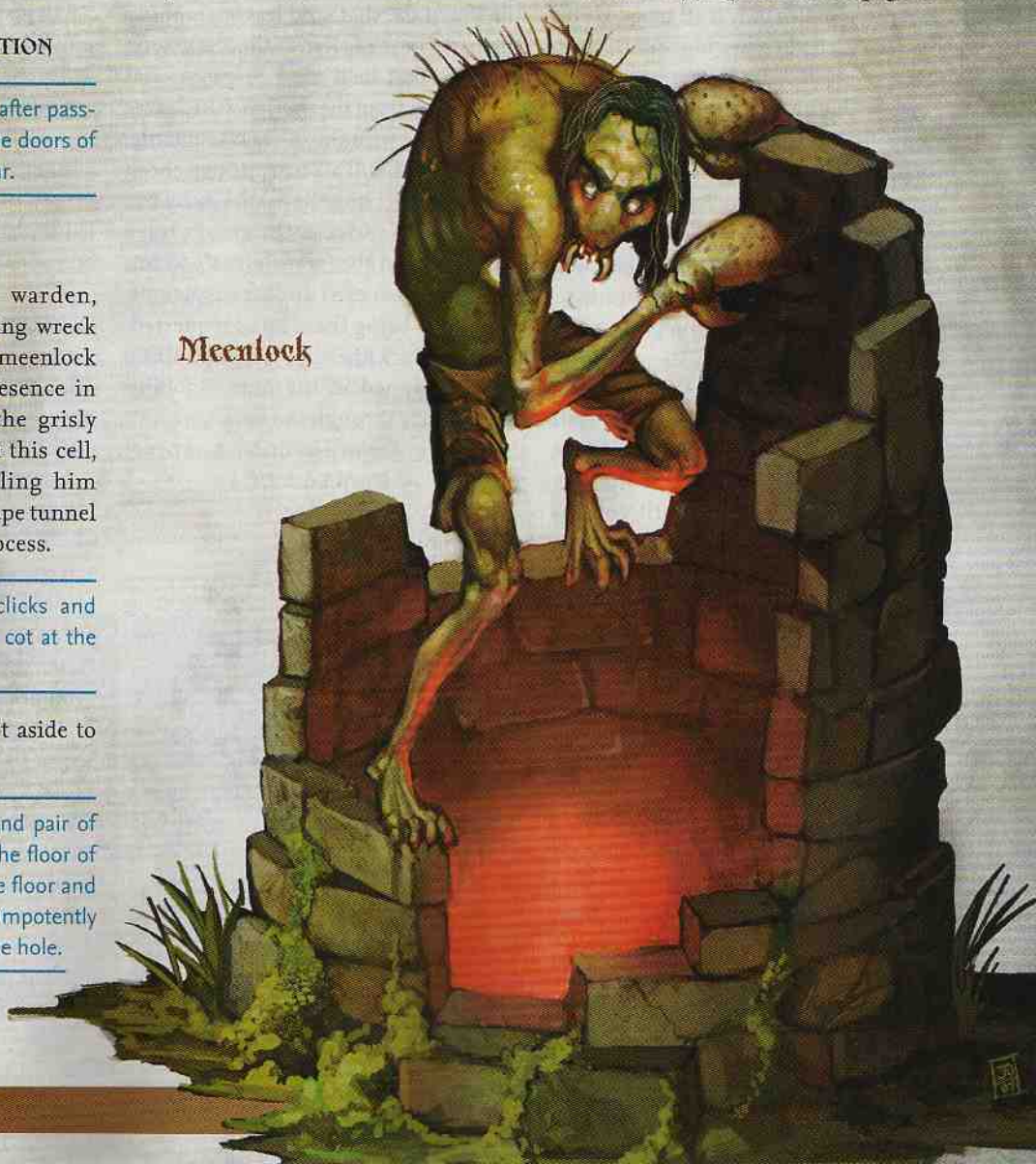
Creature: If present, Oban Relks (area **7c**) recognizes his father-in-law, the warden. It requires only a DC 10 Spot check to read the creature's lips and understand that it is mouthing along in time with the ongoing telepathic mantra.

Creatures: If the PCs do not interfere for 2 rounds, two meenlocks pull Parks into the tunnel at a rate of 5 feet per round. The tunnel proceeds for 25 feet before dropping 5 feet into area **13**. It is just large enough to accommodate a crawling Medium creature.

If the PCs save the warden, he returns to normal with the healing of his ability damage. If the PCs leave the warden with the meenlocks for 1 hour and the area **6** meenlock is dead, they slay the warden and decorate area **13** with his innards. Otherwise, the three meenlocks complete the warden's transformation. He emerges a tiny, misshapen creature with pupilless eyes and ulcerated skin. Thick hairs spike from his stooped back and his long arms end in pincer claws that drag upon the ground.

Warden Parks: hp 5; see page 17.

Meenlock (2): hp 18 each, see page 21.



Meenlock

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is designed for four 1st-level characters. To scale the adventure for 2nd–3rd level parties, adjust all NPC character levels by the amount which the average party level is above one, arm the antagonistic prisoners with pilfered shortspears, and add another meenlock to area **9b**.

Tactics: If the PCs kill the warden or pull him free, the telepathically connected meenlocks attack. One uses its fear aura. Both use dimension door to achieve distant, line-of-effect positions to issue rend mind attacks in an effort to separate and weaken unaffected PCs for the second meenlock's fear aura. Lone PCs become the subject of paralyzing hit-and-run claw attacks. The meenlocks do not pursue fleeing PCs. They enter melee only if all ranged lines of effect to the PCs are blocked.

If a catatonic or paralyzed PC is left alone with the meenlocks, they bind him with rope. If three meenlocks still live, the meenlocks begin transforming the PC as soon as they are done with the warden. Either way, bound PCs are targeted with a *rend mind* phantasm of a dark shape hovering inches over the PC's prone body, whispering the word "give."

Development: If the PCs lose the battle, Lyle Benedict enters the cell when the meenlocks are briefly absent and unties one of the PCs. If the PCs win, Lyle doesn't arrive until combat has concluded. After the party was lowered into the cellar, Lyle discovered that the PCs' release form contained his name. Convinced (correctly) that authorities have finally found evidence to exonerate him of the high-profile murder for which he was imprisoned, Lyle went to Rook to explain that their gambit isn't worth his freedom. Lyle woke moments later in area **1** with a nasty bump on the back of his head, and sought the PCs to beg their mercy and protection. He explains how he became an imposter and tells the PCs honestly that he and Blessed of Pelor are the true transferees.

9B. THE FENCE

A thin man tosses and turns in fitful sleep upon his cot, muttering.

Creature: This is the 16th cell on the right—the abode of the PCs' second false transferee. His name is Sethyr Wisk, and he's a longtime member of Rook's team with a knack for fencing stolen goods. Until Sethyr's Wisdom is raised from 0 to 1, no rousing can wake him.

Sethyr Wisk: hp 5; Wis 0; see page 17.

Development: If the PCs take the two false transferees to area **1**, Finneus appears above and attempts to convince the PCs to put the prisoners in the elevator alone "for security reasons." If the PCs do, Finneus hauls the prisoners up, then locks the elevator in place at the top of the shaft and leaves, trapping the party in the cellar. If they refuse, he explains that he'll need to get special permission from the warden, then leaves and returns with the other fake guards. At this point, roll a Sense Motive check for Finneus. If he believes the party has caught on to the ruse, the crooks leave the party (and the "transferees") to rot. If the group doesn't appear suspicious, the guards bring them up as requested, only to attack them by surprise while they're trapped in the cage, stabbing their spears through the bars.

Elevator Cage: Hardness 5, hp 20; Break DC 15; Open Lock DC 15.

10. RESERVES

The smell of rancid meat and sweet, rotting fruit fills the air of this pitch-dark room. Flies buzz in the southeast corner.

This room contains the bulk of the prison's neglected food supply. A long loading ramp leading down from area **1** is blocked by a number of heavy barrels. Shelves of filled wine bottles dominate the northwest corner. In the southeast corner, burlap bags of grain and bushels of moldy fruit sit on the floor. The rotting carcasses of four cows swing from metal hooks in the ceiling.

11. DISSIDENT'S WINE

The only light in this twenty-five-foot-tall room comes from a doorway on the south wall. A five-foot-wide path snakes around hundreds of oak barrels stacked five high.

A long ramp on the east side descends 10 feet from area **2** into this dark room where Dissident's Wine ages.

12. LOADING BAY (EL 2)

Four twelve-foot-tall fermentation vats, each one ten feet in diameter, stand in the corners of this well-lit room. A few feet above each vat, a three-foot-square wooden platform is suspended from the ceiling by long steel pins. A two-foot-wide wooden walkway connects the platforms, forming a catwalk around the perimeter of the room. On the west side of this catwalk, a fifth platform extends beyond the room into a metal cage.

From a door on the east wall, a long ramp leads down 10 feet into this sunken room. There is a door in the center of the north wall, and a metal ladder affixed to the south wall provides access to the catwalk.

13. MEENLOCK LAIR

After twenty-five feet, the thin tunnel drops into a five-foot-tall cavern. Ripped clothing, short lengths of rope, and other refuse litter the floor. A similar tunnel exits to the northeast.

Treasure: Possessions of transformed victims often fall away at the site of their transformation. Here a DC 13 Search check reveals 48 gp, a bent silver holy symbol worth 15 gp, a *wand of color spray* (5 charges), and a spiked gauntlet.

14. THE CHIMNEY

The northeast tunnel connects to the Underdark through numerous long-abandoned ankheg tunnels. A 20-foot-tall vertical chimney shoots to the surface 30 feet from area **13**. It is just wide enough for a Medium creature to climb (DC 10). An additional Climb check is

necessary to maintain position at the top while moving aside the 50-pound rock that caps the chimney.

15. ASSASSIN VINEYARD (EL 3)

Creature: Ten assassin vines are cultivated for their potent berries in a 65-by-35-foot vineyard behind the chateau. The warden, convinced that meat-fed plants produce tastier berries, had the entire field covered with a muslin sheet to discourage photosynthesis. Suspended over the field by 8-foot-tall wooden poles, the sheet droop within 2 feet of the ground around the perimeter.

Originally, lynchpins anchored each plant to a buried grid of steel rods, piercing the vines' lengths at 2-foot intervals and forcing the vines to grow along the ground, making it easy for workers to harvest the berries. Since the chaos of the breakout, however, proper maintenance has gone by the wayside, and one of the plants near the tunnel entrance has torn free, eagerly attacking anything foolish enough to approach. If the party engages it, the sound of clinking metal fills the air as the other vines thrash uselessly against their steel anchors.

Assassin Vine: hp 30; *Monster Manual* 20.

THE SHOWDOWN

Regardless of how the PCs escape the cellar, if they return to the chateau, they find the con men in the final stages of their plan. Unable to access the underground stores of wine, Rook has convinced the wine merchants and their laborers to load the meager aboveground stores first. It's his hope that while they're busy transferring goods, he and his associates can ambush them in small groups, killing them quickly and escaping into the woods with the loot.

Tensions run high in the lavishly appointed front hall where the three remaining crooks sit with Rolphus the wine merchant and four small chests. All three are surprised to see the PCs, and any sort of accusation immediately begins a brawl.

Rook, Del, and Finneus, Conmen: hp 13 each; see page 17.

Tactics: Del and Finneus fight until one of their group is slain, at which point they break and run for the door, each attempting to scoop up a chest on his way out. If any two members are dropped or escape, the third one grabs Rolphus and puts his spearpoint beneath the merchant's chin, demanding one of the chests and safe passage to the woods. If granted it, he carries his hostage for half a mile before abandoning him and running for freedom

Treasure: Each of the four chests contains 1,000 gp , though this money is technically the rightful property of the wine merchants.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs' given mission is a success if they return Lyle Benedict and Blessed of Pelor as per Tarrow Shick's orders. If the PCs do not return with these men or, worse yet, return with the wrong men, Tarrow's superiors insulate themselves from the debacle by asking Tarrow and the PCs to leave the community.

The chateau and its prisoners have many possible fates. If no meenlocks die, the surviving prisoners are eventually transformed into meenlocks, who then use dimension door to abandon their cells and leave the prison empty. Unless the PCs kill all three meenlocks, each prisoner is systematically reduced to Wisdom 0 over the next few days, assuming they don't starve to death first.

If the PCs take more than 24 hours to escape and return to the chateau, the imposters murder the merchants and escape with their gold.

If Warden Parks or Lyle Benedict survives, he is a credible witness to the true story. Parks sells off all the wine and gives the PCs 100 gp each for saving his life. Shortly thereafter, he releases all prisoners to their respective authorities and abandons the chateau forever.

Tim and Eileen Connors swear that this adventure's chateau-prison bears absolutely no resemblance to Stanmer House in Sussex, England, nearby where the two met, fell in love, and recently renewed their wedding vows. But then, they also swear that there's no such thing as meenlocks.

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

GAH! YOU'VE BEEN EATING FOOD WHILE PLAYING MY WII! IT'S STICKY AND SMELLS OF TORTILLAS!
HOW CAN I ENJOY ZELDA WHEN MY CHOICE OF INPUT DEVICE SMELLS OF MEXICAN FOOD!
ZELDA IS LIKE A FINE WINE, IT NEEDS TO BE ENJOYED WITH THE RIGHT KIND OF CUISINE!
BY THE WAY, I BORROWED YOUR PSP. KINDA NEAT.

WWW.THEPORTENT.COM

Spawn of Sehan

Seeds of Sehan Part 2

BY TOM GANZ, B. MATTHEW CONKLIN III, STEFAN HAPP, STEPHEN S. GREER, AND ASHAVAN DOYON
BY UDON WITH TODD GAK, JIM ZUBKAVICH, AND SHANE LAW
BY ROB LAZZARETTI

ANY SETTING | MID- LEVEL (6TH–12TH) | DUNGEON CRAWL

Deep within an ancient necropolis, a pool of alien slime discovered by an eccentric explorer warps the minds and bodies of the people of Exag with wispy tendrils of madness. Those transformed by its power invariably seek the crypt within the wilderness, drawn there by a strange lure and a sense of belonging. To what end do they gather? What fell power attracts them? The answers to these mysteries lie buried in the dusty depths of the necropolis known as Cair Pahor'an.

The second installment in the 3-part Seeds of Sehan campaign arc, "Spawn of Sehan" is intended for a group of four 9th-level characters. Although it assumes the characters have already played through "Vile Addiction," it can also be used as a stand-alone adventure.

The Story So Far...

In "Vile Addiction," the PCs discovered a villainous gang of spriggans operating a drug ring in Exag from a secret lair beneath the city sewers. During their investigation, they made the acquaintance of a fortuneteller named Pan'phar Thrissek. Unbeknownst to the locals, a yak folk slave collector named Arghakot Annapuma inhabits the body of Thrissek and uses this façade to ensure that his people in the nearby Yatil Mountains receive a steady supply of laborers.

To thwart the spriggan gang's plans to expose all of the citizens of Exag to a chemically reproduced version of Sehan called Green Welcome, the characters descended into the city sewer system and found the entrance to the spriggan hideout. After fighting past their guardians and traps, the characters defeated the spriggans and destroyed their drug lab. Clues left by the spriggans indicate that the source of their powerful drug is a mysterious cult hidden somewhere in the Mounds of Dawn. Cultists there worship something called Sehan, and Green Welcome was alchemically derived from the excretions of their god.

When the PCs return from the hideout they learn that many of Exag's citizens have undergone horrid transformations into slimy plant monsters called children of Sehan. These creatures have all migrated to the hills outside the city and disappeared. Pan'phar Thrissek has also vanished with the destruction of the drug trade, and was last seen following a child of Sehan into the hills.

Though the spriggan gang no longer poses a threat to Exag, Thrissek's interest on behalf of his yak folk does. But an even more pressing danger is the source of the mysterious substance, for deep within the desolate hills, Sehan stirs.

Adventure Background

Although the necropolis of Cair Pahor'an has been looted repeatedly, adventurers and archeologists investigating the mysteries of Exag often return to this burial site. Here, away from the interference of superstitious locals, they hope to find some insight into the marvels of the city among the remains of the original settlers.

Several months ago, a greedy self-serving Flan shaman and part-time guide named Kanuut escorted a group of archeologists into the necropolis. Unlike most of Exag's citizens, Kanuut knew the location of a secret passage leading to chambers deeper within the necropolis and had no qualms about selling this knowledge to outsiders.

When they descended to the deepest level of the necropolis, they found that it had suffered major structural damage from a recent earthquake. In a deep cavern, they found a large gaping fissure in the floor where none had existed before. From it wafted a sickly sweet odor, at once disturbing and pleasant.

They elected Kanuut to investigate, but during his descent he slipped and fell into the deep shaft, plunging into a glowing pool of fetid alien slime. As he vainly attempted to swim to the surface, a strange feeling of euphoria washed over him and ceased struggling. As he floated in the slimy depths of the pool, his body and mind underwent a drastic change.

Hours later he was lying on the rocks beside the pool of slime. Aware of a sense of joined consciousness with the slime pool, he discovered that he had grown a pair of long, slimy tentacles from his torso. Realizing he clutched small wet objects in his hands, he opened them to reveal a pair of human eyes. He dropped them hastily and scrambled to his feet.

As he looked around the cave he realized that his senses had changed. With only the dim light emitted from the slimy pool, he could see clearly. Textures, shapes, and depths seemed much sharper. He raised a hand to his face and felt only empty sockets where his eyes had been. Some part of him thought he should feel revulsion and horror, but in its place was contentment and a feeling of completion.

When Kanuut climbed from the fissure the archeologists shrieked and tried to kill him, but they proved no match for his newfound strength. Soon they rested with the dead.

During the following weeks, Kanuut secretly entered Exag to share his new enlightenment with friends and relatives, preaching of a new god called Sehan, a word in the Flan tongue that means "heavenly nectar." Soon he had built up a cult that believed that all of the secrets of life could be found through "oneness" with Sehan. The cult took up residence in one of the tombs in the necropolis, and eventually Kanuut and many of the cultists lost all desire to leave, basking in the feeling that came from consuming small quantities of Sehan that Kanuut had started to secrete. Taking the secretions as a sign of divine blessing, the cultists named Kanuut the chosen prophet of Sehan.

In addition to the secretions, an insatiable hunger began gnawing at Kanuut's stomach, and the cultists brought him a steady stream of food as Kanuut strived to satisfy it. His body grew large and bloated, a change he welcomed. Now calling himself Sehan, Kanuut barely remembers that he once had another name. Regarded by the cultists as the embodiment of Sehan, his body has grown to the size of an ogre, obese beyond belief. He can feel himself still evolving into something divine.

Adventure Synopsis

Following the recently transformed children of Sehan and Pan'phar Thrissek, the PCs leave Exag to investigate the mysterious activities in the ancient necropolis of Cair Pahor'an. On the way there they encounter a pair of chaos beasts that resulted from a battle between werewolves and children of Sehan. The PCs must locate the secret staircase on the first level of the necropolis to access the lower levels.

On the second level, a succubus attempts to prevent the adventurers from exploring any deeper by using trickery and magic. Traps, spectres, and a web golem await the PCs in the next rooms, and braving a scissoring blades trap may be necessary to open the hidden stone door that blocks access to the lower areas of the necropolis. In the depths below the Cult of Sehan gathers near the alien pool of slime from which all of the current problems sprang—the True Source. The PCs must deal with the Cult of Sehan and their vile leader if they wish to rid this region of their growing influence. After defeating the cult, the PCs climb down into the deep fissure in order to destroy the True Source, but when the PCs explore the cavern at the bottom, clues reveal that someone made off with a sample of the pool's slime.

Adventure Hooks

If you are running this adventure as the second installment in the Seeds of Sehan campaign arc, recent events in Exag demand investigation and lead the PCs to an exploration of the ancient Flan necropolis in the hills outside of the city. Otherwise, consider the alternate adventure hooks provided below.

- It is not widely known yet that a new drug on the market in Exag has been transforming its users into monstrous plant creatures. People have gone missing at the same time that monsters have been appearing in the city. The locals adamantly believe that destroying the monsters lurking in and around Cair Pahor'an will lead to the return of their missing friends.
- Voorman Hugelrote has learned of increasing acts of banditry and lawlessness around Exag. Hoping to avoid further embarrassment by his son, Bertram (the current ambassador to the city) he sends a group of adventurers to Exag to observe current events and report back to him. When the adventurers

arrive, Bertram Hugelrote hires them to investigate recent events leading to the necropolis. The migrations of children of Sehan to Cair Pahor'an have halted the activities of his gang, which uses the caves and valleys in that area as a staging ground for raids and to stash stolen goods.

CHAPTER ONE: TRACES OF MADNESS

All of the clues and strange occurrences surrounding the rash of drug addictions and ghastly transformations in Exag point to the moldering crypts well outside the city walls. A hard-packed dirt path winds its way through the hills from Exag for approximately 36 miles until it reaches the rocky hill that contains the necropolis.

The following encounter takes place during the trek from Exag to the necropolis.

The Howls and Gurgles of the Spawned (EL 10)

Pained grunts and growls come from around a bend in the dirt path. An ear-piercing howl quickly degenerates into gurgling.

Creatures: Three writhing shapes, masses of tentacles with wolf muzzles covered in patches of scraggly fur and slick green slime, guard the pathway. These chaos beasts formed when three werewolves traveling to Exag in human form ran afoul of a group of children of Sehan journeying to Cair Pahor'an. The effect of massive exposure to Sehan when the children of Sehan poisoned the shapeshifters wreaked havoc on their bodies, which chaotically shift from one nightmarish form to the other, driving them mad with pain and confusion.

Chaos Beasts (3): hp 44 each; *Monster Manual* 33

Tactics: The chaos beasts lurch toward the PCs, pleading for help with mouths incapable of forming coherent speech while at the same time clawing at them out of insane frustration. They pursue the PCs as far as they can, and fight until slain.

Development: A successful DC 20 Spot check in this area allows a PC to notice drying patches of slime left by the children of Sehan during the combat with the lycanthropes. The muddy puddles that lead from this combat site confirm that the children of Sehan are heading to Cair Pahor'an.

Cair Pahor'an Features

The residents of Exag have seen adventurers set off to explore this necropolis for decades. At first, the Crafter cultists resisted the explorer's attempts to loot these ancient crypts, but it soon became obvious that this task was hopeless. Occasionally groups of explorers return from the tombs with reports of monsters, but locals consider it a fool's errand to go there these days. They believe that anything that could yield even a copper was looted long ago, and the ancient burial crypts are hopelessly desecrated.

With the exception of areas **12–15**, the walls, ceilings, and floors of the necropolis are of hewn stone. Unless stated otherwise, the ceilings are uniformly 10 feet high. Areas **5–10** have specially designed stone doors that require the characters to repeatedly pull on a lever in the wall, which operates a lifting mechanism. Lifting the doors requires 4 consecutive DC 15 Strength checks. With each pull, gears can be heard turning within the stone walls causing the door to lift into a recess above it. Each time a Strength check is failed, the stone door slowly lowers to the point it was at before, eventually low-

ering all the way to the floor if enough checks are failed. However, once the door is all the way up, it locks in place until the lever is used again, at which time it slowly lowers until closed.

Areas **12–15** have been built with superior masonry walls and tightly fitted flagstones. Iron doors prevent entry into these rooms.

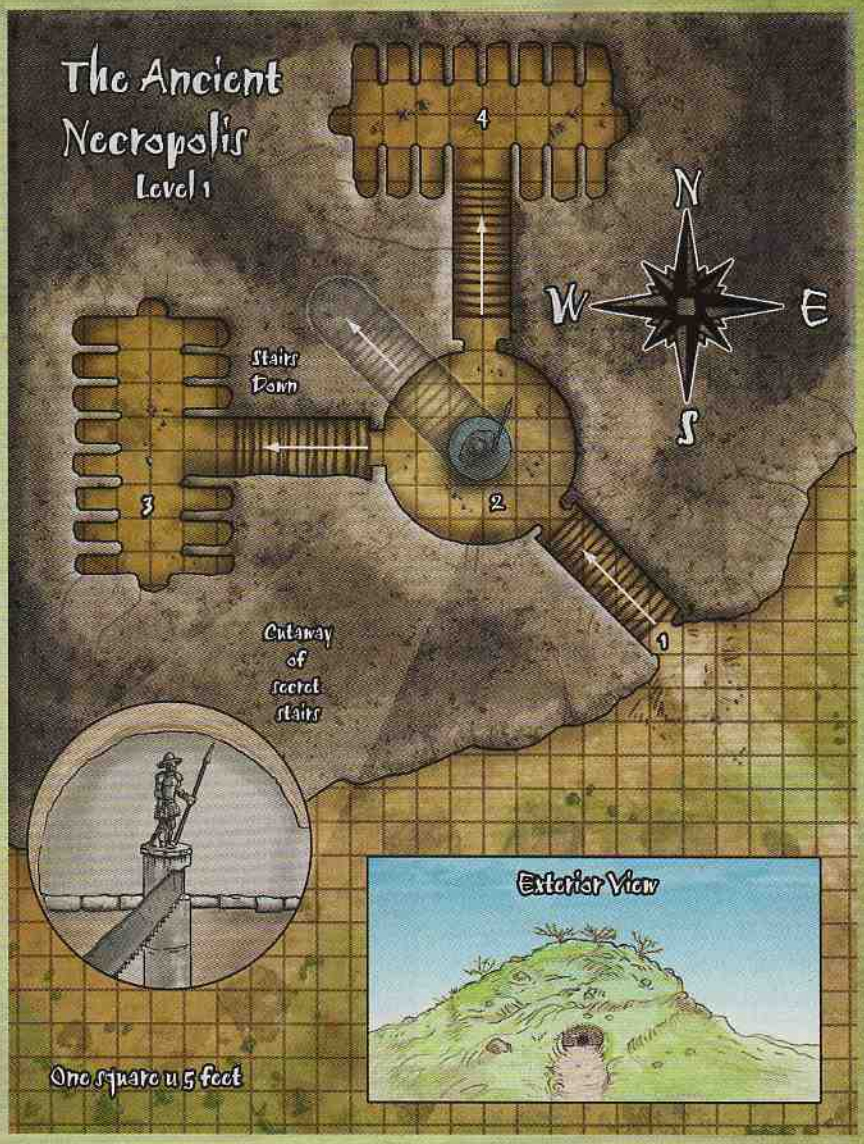
There is no light in the necropolis aside from what the characters bring with them unless specified in a room's description.

Hewn Stone Wall: 3 feet thick; hp 540; Hardness 8; Break DC 50; Climb DC 22.

Superior Masonry Wall: 1 foot thick; hp 90; Hardness 8; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; hp 60; Hardness 8; Break DC 28; 4 consecutive DC 15 Strength checks to lift using lever.

Iron Door: 2 in. thick; hp 60; Hardness 10; Break DC 28 (locked); Open Lock DC 30.



1. Necropolis Entrance

Weeds and a wild tangle of rosebushes and briars cover a large earthen mound. A bowl-shaped depression on one side descends to a dark hole. Loose bricks lie scattered about the depression and some still cling to the edges of the entrance. Roughly carved stone steps descend sharply into the darkness.

The depression slopes down approximately 8 feet. The opening is narrow and low enough that Medium creatures have to stoop to enter and pass through single-file. Beyond the threshold a staircase of hewn stone descends 20 feet to area **2**.

A PC succeeding on a DC 15 Search of the entrance notices a clear greenish residue around the entrance and that a few bricks have been knocked loose recently. The residue and loose bricks resulted from children of Sehan squeezing through this entrance into the necropolis. One still lurks below in area **2**.

As the PCs start down the steps they notice flickering light from an everburning torch lying on the floor in the chamber below.

2. The Fate of Aamon A'tir (EL 9)

The stairs enter a round conical chamber rising to approximately twenty-five feet at its highest point. Two hewn tunnels exit the chamber to the north and west. At the center of the chamber, a badly damaged stone statue of a warrior holding a spear stands silent vigil over the dead interred here. A lit torch lies near its feet, illuminating the room. Puddles of slime dot the uneven stone floor and the chamber reeks of a noxious sour odor.

A DC 25 Search of the statue reveals that the arm holding the spear may be pulled down to operate a mechanism. Doing so causes the short, 10-foot-diameter platform it stands on to corkscrew upward 10 feet revealing an archway with a set of stairs descending to area **5**. The top 10 feet of the stairs are actually part of the stone column the statue stands upon. The column lowers again after 1 minute, but may be opened from below by pulling down on a lever at the bottom the stairs. The puddles on the floor are Sehan slime.

Pan'phar Thrissek dropped the everburning torch on the floor when he entered the secret stairs invisibly as a means of evading the guardian creature long enough for him to operate the mechanism and enter the secret passage.

Creature: A monstrous being that was once a carpenter in Exag named Aamon A'tir lurks behind the statue. He is responsible for the slimy puddles.

Arghakot Annapuma kidnapped and exposed him to Sehan until he overdosed on it. When he regained consciousness he was no longer Aamon A'tir, but a plant creature filled with the oneness of Sehan and driven by the desire to seek him out. Snapping his bonds, he escaped from Arghakot Annapuma's testing area in a remote corner of Exag and made his way to the ancient necropolis. Arghakot Annapuma followed him and during the fight between the child of Sehan and the other creature here (see below), he darted down the secret staircase. Aamon A'tir has lurked here since then, wandering between areas **2**, **3**, and **4**. Kanuut (area **15**) is content to allow him to guard the upper passageways.

A large and cunning choker also lurks here. It entered the necropolis a few days ago to set up a permanent lair here in hopes of plentiful prey. However, the thrashing arms of a child of Sehan kept it from its first potential meal. Its attempts to leave the necropolis have met with more frenzied attacks by the slimy creature, leaving the choker wounded and hungry. It crawled up into the deep shadows of the high ceiling and has stayed hidden, waiting for an opportune moment to clamber down and escape.

CHILD OF SEHAN CR 8
CE Medium plant
DUNGEON #145
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +11, Spot +11
Languages Common (cannot speak)
Aura calming gaze (DC 21)

AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 24
hp 82 (11 HD)
Immune acid, plant traits
Fort +10, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +14 (1d8+5 plus poison of Sehan)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +13
Atk Options rend 2d6+7

Abilities Str 20, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 18, Cha 6
SQ hive mind, sympathetic defense
Feats Ability Focus (poison), Ability Focus (calming gaze), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Listen +8, Spot +8

Calming Gaze (Su) A child of Sehan is totally in tune with its surroundings, and emits a supernatural aura of peace and tranquility, even as it rips apart its foes and transforms them into terrifying monsters. Any creature that meets its gaze must make a DC 21 Will save or be affected as though by a *calm emotions* spell (CL equals the Child of Sehan's HD). If the child of Sehan attacks, it ends this effect for the target of the attack only. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect, and the save DC is Wisdom-based.

Poison of Sehan (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 20. Initial damage 1 Intelligence drain, secondary damage 3d6 Charisma. Any humanoid creature reduced to 0 Charisma by this effect immediately undergoes a monstrous transformation into a child of Sehan over the course of the next 3 rounds as its sense of self is washed away by the unifying consciousness of Sehan. For the first 4 hours after its transformation, the creature is ripped by intense agony as the master consciousness of Sehan eliminates all trace of individuality from the creature. During this time, the new child of Sehan behaves as if under the effect of an ongoing *confusion* spell, and loses all of its supernatural abilities. During this time, the transformation can be halted by *remove disease*, *restoration*, *neutralize poison*, *heal*, or *dispel evil*, but once it is complete only *miracle* or *wish* can reverse it. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Hive Mind (Su) The children of Sehan share a unified consciousness with their master Sehan and his other children. This consciousness extends out to a 25-mile radius from Sehan itself. Within that range, if one is aware of a paticular danger, they all are. If one in a group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No child of Sehan in a group is considered flanked unless they all are. Beyond the range of the hive mind, individual Children of Sehan can still sense the direction of their master, and are compelled to reach him as soon as possible.

Sympathetic Defense (Su) A child of Sehan gains an insight bonus to its AC equal to its Wisdom bonus.

ADVANCED CHOKER CR 7
CE Medium aberration
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Undercommon

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14
hp 90 (currently 61) (12 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.
Melee 2 tentacles +16 (1d4+6)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +19
Atk Options Power Attack, quickness
Special Actions constrict 1d4+6, improved grab

Abilities Str 22, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 7
Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Hide), Stealthy, Weapon Focus (tentacle)
Skills Climb +18, Hide +11, Move Silently +8

Tactics: The child of Sehan makes good use of its gaze attack, then proceeds to rip apart the PCs one at a time, leaving those that fail their saves against its gaze attack for last. In the chaos of battle the choker scurries down and tries to escape, attacking any creatures in its way. Driven by hunger, it won't think twice about grabbing a PC on its way out to be carried off and eaten later.

3. Trapped Urn (EL 10)

Burial niches line the walls of this chamber. Scattered bones are all that remain of the dead interred here long ago. Puddles of slime lie in depressions of the hewn stone floor.

In the south and north walls, smaller niches hold broken pieces of ancient urns. Buried under the dust of ages, one urn still remains intact in the southern niche.

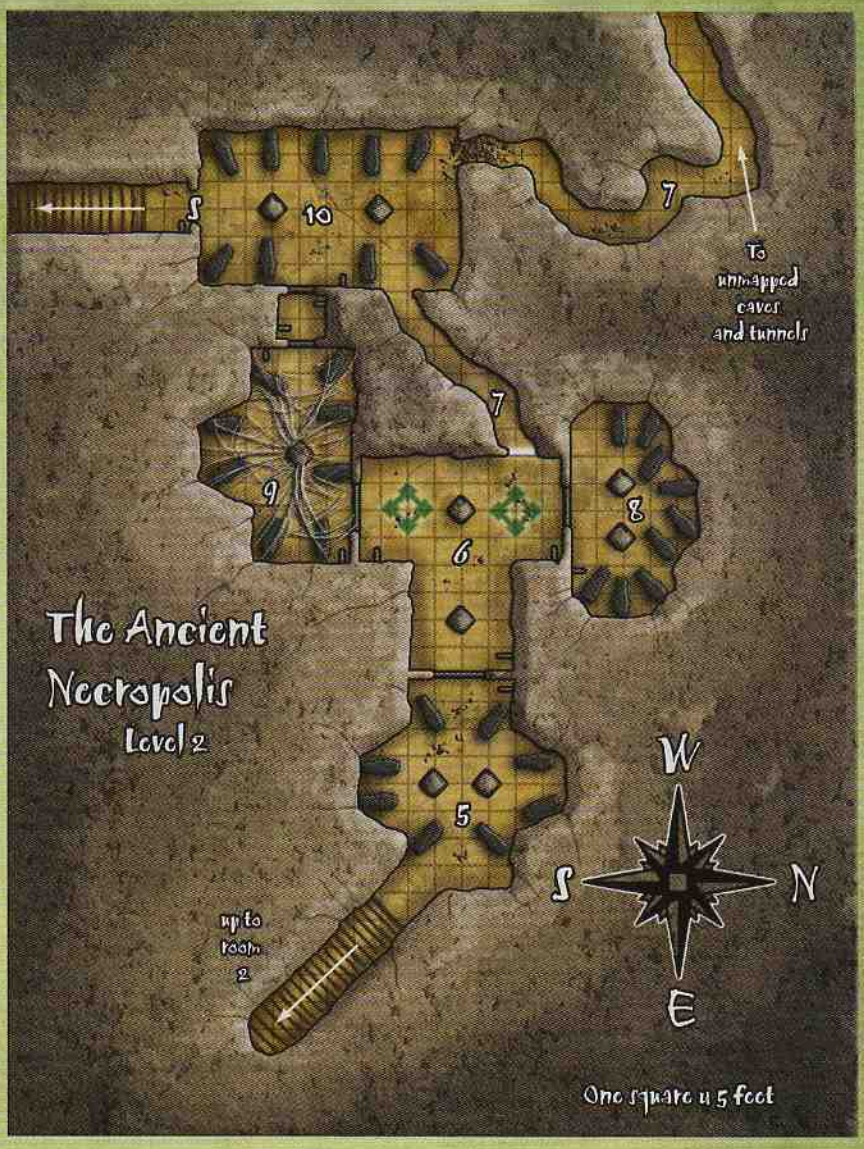
Nothing of value remains here. The puddles are drippings from Aamon A'tir, left in his initial meandering. The broken urns once held bear hearts, eagle feathers, and other tokens believed to protect and guide the souls of the dead in the afterlife.

Trap: The single intact urn is a deadly trap for looters. The urn is sealed with a tight-fitting lid. If *detect magic* is used here, the urn radiates a strong aura of conjuration magic.

Removing the lid or breaking the urn summons a bloodfiend locust swarm that

VARIANT RULE: GREEN SLIME AS A WEAPON

With a bit of ingenuity, player characters might be able to use green slime as a weapon. Assuming they make a DC 12 Dexterity check to avoid contact with it and have a suitable container with which to scoop it up, they could use it to make a splash attack similar to an attack with holy water. A hit deals 1d2 points of Constitution damage per round as it slowly consumes organic matter and grows. There is no splash damage, but in the event of a miss, creatures within 5 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid contact with it.



shatters the urn as it spills out to attack any creatures in its path for 9 minutes.

Bloodfiend Locust Swarm Trap: CR 10; spell; touch trigger; no reset; summons a bloodfiend locust swarm; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

BLOODFIEND LOCUST SWARM **CR 8**

CE Fine vermin (extraplanar, swarm)
Fiend Folio 170
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15
hp 91 (14 HD)
Immune swarm traits, vermin traits
Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Spd 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (perfect)
Melee swarm (3d6 plus energy drain)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +10; **Grp** —
Atk Options distraction (DC 19), energy drain, reanimate

Abilities Str 1, Dex 18, Con 14, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 11

Energy Drain (Su) Living creatures damaged by a bloodfiend locust swarm gain one negative level. It takes a DC 19 Fortitude save to remove these negative levels.
Reanimate (Su) A humanoid or monstrous humanoid killed by the energy drain attack of a bloodfiend locust swarm rises 2d6 hours later as a fiendish vampire spawn.

4. Deadly Secretions (EL 7)

Burial niches line the north and south walls of this chamber and smaller niches to the east and west contain pieces of broken clay urns. Scattered bones are all that remain of the dead interred here long ago. A puddle of grayish-green slime lies in the uneven stone floor at the bottom of the stairs. Smaller puddles can be seen here and there.

Creatures: Unlike the small puddles left here by Aamon A'tir, the larger puddle is green slime. It occupies the western 5-foot square near the bottom of the stairs just inside area 4. A second green slime clings to the ceiling over the empty adjacent 5-foot square to the east (Spot DC 20 to notice), and drops on any creature besides Aamon A'tir that walks under it.

The constantly oozing flesh of The Great Bloated One (see room 15) spawned these green slime patches during his endless hours of wallowing in his own secretions. Each possesses a rudimentary intelligence independent of Kanuut. Scooped up in stone containers, the cultists brought them here to deal with unwanted visitors.

See page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on green slime.

5. The Damsel in Distress (EL 8)

The stairs descend twenty-five feet to a roughly hewn chamber occupied by eight stone sarcophagi, their lids lying next to them. The ancient powdery bones of the former occupants of the sarcophagi litter much of the room. A pair of thick columns

supports the ceiling and a stone door with no latch or keyhole occupies the center of the northern wall. A stout iron lever protrudes from the wall near it.

A lever in the wall at the bottom of the stairs operates the hidden stair entrance in area 2. This room has been looted of anything of value.

Creature: Kanuut (room 15) recently called the succubus Beldien to this room to guard against possible intrusions. Her services have been paid for with the willing sacrifice of one of the cultists. She remains here for only 1 more day before returning to the Abyss. She appears as a comely Flan girl from Exag.

Beldien, Succubus: hp 35; *Monster Manual* 47

Tactics: Beldien lies in an open sarcophagus moaning and pleading for help when the PCs enter. She claims cultists captured her and covered her with a powdered drug that made her too weak to even sit up. She attempts to get one of the PCs to help her out of the sarcophagus and carry her, using a *charm monster* spell if necessary. She "feebly" puts her arms around this PC and attempts to kiss the character as a thank you. If the PC resists, she bestows a negative level while embracing the character, claiming that the poison powder must still be on her when the character reacts.

When her ruse is blown, Beldien casts *suggestion* spells meant to divide the party. She then grapples a weak PC and bestows as many negative levels as possible, before defending herself physically. If reduced to below half her total hit points or otherwise incapacitated, she considers her duties fulfilled and escapes using *greater teleport*.

6. Warded Chamber (EL 6)

This large T-shaped chamber appears empty. Two five-foot-thick, roughly hewn columns support the ceiling. Stone doors without latches or keyholes bar passage through openings in the east and west walls.

An *illusory wall* spell (DC 18 Will save to disbelieve if interacted with) conceals the tunnel in the north wall.

Traps: Using scrolls, Kanuut has placed two *glyph of warding* (sonic blast) traps here.

***Glyph of Warding* Trap (2):** CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 11th-level cleric, 5d8 sonic, DC 14 reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

7. Umber Hulk Tunnels

Years ago, a tunneling umber hulk broke through into area 10. It then investigated area 6, which was guarded by a powerful undead creature. The umber hulk destroyed the creature, but the battle grievously wounded it. It retreated back the way it came and never returned. Over the years, other creatures have found their way in through the tunnel it left behind. The tunnel from area 10 remains open and leads deeper into the earth, though the cultists have made a feeble attempt at blocking it with rubble. It leads to unmapped areas beyond the scope of this adventure.

The cultists use the tunnel between areas 10 and 6 if they need to enter the southern portion of this level.

8. Crypt of the Warlords (EL 10)

The air in this large crypt is heavy and cold. Nine stone sarcophagi rest along the walls, their lids knocked loose, removed, or broken to pieces. The intact lids bear depictions of ancient warriors holding scimitars.

This crypt was devoted to great Flan warriors of antiquity whose deeds are still remembered and celebrated in local folklore and legends.

Creature: The restless spirits of three of the interred warlords haunt this chamber, ready to attack any intruders that would further desecrate it. They appear as glowing warriors covered in ritual scarification and war paint.

Spectres (3): hp 45 each; *Monster Manual* 232.

Treasure: An ancient +2 *adamantine scimitar* once wielded by one of the Flan warriors has eluded the many looters and is hidden under a loose stone beneath a sarcophagus (Search DC 30).

DON'T LOSE YOUR WAY.

Why go to the trouble using miniatures only to push them around an empty table? Paizo's *GameMastery Map Packs* contain full-color gridded maps for use with RPGs and miniatures games. *GameMastery Map Packs* provide everything you need to stay a step ahead of your players. Use this product to build encounters that perfectly fit your campaign.

Each *Map Pack* contains 18 full-color 8" × 5" map cards suitable for use with *GameMastery Compleat Encounters* or any standard gaming miniatures.

paizo PUBLISHING

AVAILABLE NOW!

© 2005 Paizo Publishing, LLC.

Glyphs etched into the blade in the ancient Flan tongue translate to "kiss of the crescent moon."

9. Crypt of the Wise Ones (EL 9)

The stone door between this room and area **6** is more difficult to open (DC 17 Strength check) from the north due to the webs choking the room.

Sheets of webbing shroud this crypt as if thousands of spiders have taken up residence here. Sarcophagi with missing or broken lids and ancient bones scattered about the floor and in the webbing are visible through the thick veil of webs.

This crypt was dedicated to wise leaders, scholars, and sages of the ancient Flan. Two sarcophagus lids are still intact. Each depicts robed men holding staves in one hand and scrolls in the other.

Layers of sheet webs fill this room. Each 5-foot square is filled with webs (2 hp, hardness 5, DC 14 Strength check to break through). If a character fails to break through the webbing, he becomes entangled, but can break free with a DC 14 Strength check or a DC 10 Escape Artist check. The sheer volume of webs makes them clearly visible.

Creatures: A necromancer that once lived in Cair Pahor'an built a web golem to guard this room from trespassers. It appears as a large, humanoid creature made of webs, with eight spider-like eyes and a fanged mouth dripping venom. Dispite the necromancer's death, the web golem continues guarding this crypt against intruders, and has attracted swarms of pale subterranean spiders. The cultists rightfully fear this room, and even Kanuut is reluctant to enter. Since it never leaves this room and acts as a deterrent against trespassers, they have left the creature alone.

Web Golem **CR 7**

N Large construct

Monster Manual III 74

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17

hp 90 (11 HD); DR 10/adamantine; fast healing 5

Immune construct traits, magic, webs

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

Weaknesses *grease* spell, vulnerable to fire

Spd 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +12 (2d10+7) and bite +7 (1d6+2 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +17

Atk Options poison (1d6 Str/1d6 Str, Fort DC 15 negates)

Spell-Like Abilites (CL 10th) 3/day—*web* (DC 13)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

SQ adhesive, spider climb

Skills Hide –1 (or +14 in webs)

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A web golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A *grease* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.

A web golem's movement is not inhibited by a *web* spell.

Adhesive (Ex) A web golem is extremely sticky. Anyone who makes an unsuccessful melee attack against a web golem must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save, or the attacker's weapon sticks to the web golem and is yanked out of the wielder's grasp. Creatures using natural weapons are automatically grappled if they fail their save. Pulling a stuck weapon or limb loose from a web golem requires a DC 20 Strength check.

Spider Climb (Su) A web golem has a continuous *spider climb* ability, as the spell.

Spider Swarms (4): hp 9 each; *Monster Manual* 239.

Tactics: When the PCs enter, the spider swarms scuttle out of the webbing and attack the nearest targets. Unlike the web golem, the spider swarms can and will leave the crypt to pursue prey. As the spider swarms attack, the web golem crawls along the ceiling, flattening itself against the stones above the doorway until the PCs have entered or it has been spotted (DC 24 to Spot, 9 if the webs have been destroyed). It then drops from the ceiling, blocking the exit to area **6**. It prefers to grapple a single foe and inject it with multiple doses of poison until it stops struggling, or simply tear it to ribbons before grabbing the next closest enemy.

Treasure: Among the husks of the golem's victims are a total of 1,500 gold coins of mostly ancient mint, a *cloak of resistance* +1, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a masterwork greataxe, and a silver holy symbol of Olidammara.

10. Crypt of the Dragon-Touched (EL 8)

Nine massive stone sarcophagi line the walls of this chamber. Bones and ancient rags are strewn everywhere. The few intact lids bear the likenesses of men and women wearing robes adorned with moons, stars, and dragons. Cracks and even narrow fissures cover the floor and walls. In the east wall a tunnel is partially blocked somewhat by large stones. Another narrow tunnel exits the room in the south wall.

This crypt contained the arcane practitioners of the ancient Flan people. They called them Dragon Touched, ascribing their abilities to the blood of dragons in their veins. The secret door in the west wall may be located with a DC 25 Search check, and it opens like the stone doors in areas **5**, **6**, **8**, and **9**. The lever is hidden inside the sarcophagus in the southeast corner.

An intact sarcophagus near the east wall contains the body of one of the members of the Cult of Sehan. Arghakot Annapuma learned how to reach the cult's lair from the cultist before killing the man and stuffing him in the sarcophagus. He then used a *disguise self* spell to assume the dead cultist's appearance and descended further below to get to the True Source (see area **16**).

Trap: Removing the lid of the sarcophagus in the southeast corner reveals an iron lever protruding from the bottom, 3 cp, and blood splatters. The lever lifts the secret door. However, doing so triggers a motion-sensitive trap. Spring-loaded falchion blades recessed in the thick sides of the sarcophagus slash toward each other when there is motion between them. Once triggered, the blades reset after 1 minute.

Scissoring Falchions: CR 8; mechanical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; Atk +20 melee (4d4+16/18–20, masterwork falchions); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

Development: Keep track of how long it takes the PCs to get the secret door open with the lever, as the trap may be triggered a second time if they take too much time. The cultists use the coins to trigger the trap before operating the lever. Any object other than an appendage used to trigger the trap is subject to a Sunder attack by the falchions, which are quite capable of shearing through most items.

11. Trail of Drippings

A long tunnel slopes downward to the southwest, ending in stairs descending even deeper into the earth. Ragged fissures and cracks riddle the floor and walls.

The PCs may make DC 15 Spot checks to notice partially dried puddles of greenish-grey slime (Sehan) similar to the ones they saw in areas **2–3**, though not as recent. Characters with the Track feat may make a DC 15 Survival check to determine that these tracks are about 4 days old.

CHAPTER TWO: ASCENSION OF SLIME

12. Feeling the 'Oneness' (EL 10)

This huge chamber is dressed in stone masonry blocks, and its ceiling is capped by a forty-foot-high dome. A pair of thick freestanding columns sculpted to resemble giant warriors holding spears flanks alcoves in the north and south walls. To each side of these stand slender stone columns covered with ancient engravings. A third alcove in the west wall contains an open iron door. From a large fissure in the floor near the center of the room, tendrils of leafless creeping vines covered in slime crisscross the room, climbing pillars, snaking their way up the walls, and even growing into cracks in the ceiling.

Ancient script covers the slender columns describing the heroic deeds of three great chieftains interred in the adjacent crypts. A PC may make a DC 30 Decipher Script check to interpret its meaning.

A DC 15 Search of the southeast wall reveals a wooden panel painted to look like the rest of the wall. It covers a fissure in the wall that leads to a network of underground caves and tunnels that stretches for miles beneath the Mounds of Dawn. Eventually, this network connects to the sewer system below Exag. The fissure resulted from an earthquake that damaged many parts of the necropolis, and the cultists use the fissure, tunnels, and sewer system to move back and forth between the necropolis and Exag.

The vegetable matter growing here is an extension of Sehan. The large fissure in the floor is where the ambitious Flan cleric Kanuut fell and became The Great Bloated One. The main deposit of Sehan lies deep beneath this room and has been spreading its tendrils slowly upward, growing ever larger.

Creatures: Two of the children of Sehan that recently arrived here have found a niche in the Sehan cult as guardians of this fissure leading down to the True Source. They have fully adapted to their new forms and roles, and attack any creatures entering that they don't recognize as cultists or Sehan-infused creatures.

Children of Sehan (2): hp 82 each; see page 31.

Tactics: The children of Sehan attack the nearest foes immediately, but will not leave this room. They fight to the death to protect the entrance to the True Source.

Development: Thanks to their hivemind ability, Kanuut and the cultists in room 15 are immediately aware of any fighting in this room. They prepare as detailed below (see area 15).

13. Mutated Girallon (EL 10)

This crypt dedicated to a great Flan chief of antiquity has been looted. Even the sarcophagus is gone. Steps descend to a depression in the south half of the crypt with a granite slab abutting the north wall. A large iron cage squats twisted and broken in the eastern side of the room, covered in thick greenish-grey slime.

The door is locked (Open Lock DC 30) and damaged (currently 32 hp). Kanuut has the key (area 15).

Creatures: The cultists secretly purchased a mated pair of girallons from a dealer in exotic beasts and brought them here in hopes of creating a pair of extremely tough Sehan-infused creatures to provide extra muscle for the cult's future plans. They exposed them to large amounts of Sehan and soon began to see results, though not what they anticipated. As the creatures underwent a painful metamorphosis, they broke free of their cages. The cultists fled and locked the heavy iron door behind them. As the girallons clung to each other afterward, they fused into one creature, though they managed to resist the mental "joining" of Sehan. The resultant creature has a single consciousness, two heads, eight arms sticking out of its slime-covered green and white fur, and four legs upon which it awkwardly stumbles about in a state of terrible pain and rage.

The cultists keep the door locked, content to wait until the creature dies from lack of food and water or succumbs to joining with Sehan.

MUTATED GIRALLON **CR 10**

N Large aberration (augmented magical beast)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +3, Spot +10

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15

hp 85 (9 HD)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 8 claws +16 (1d4+8) and 2 bites +11 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +21

Atk Options rend 2d4+12

Abilities Str 26, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7

SQ multiheaded

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness (3)

Skills Climb +16, Move Silently +7, Search –2, Spot +10

Rend (Ex) If the mutated girallon hits with two or more claw attacks it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d4+12 points of damage.

Multiheaded (Ex) The mutated girallon's multiple heads provide it with darkvision to a range of 60 feet and a +2 bonus to Listen, Search, and Spot checks. It cannot be flanked.

Tactics: If someone unlocks the door, the mutated girallon quickly lunges out of the room, savagely attacking everything it sees. It then tries to escape from the crypt. It focuses its initial attacks on a single enemy until the foe dies, then carries the body with it to feed on later.

14. Grub-Weakened Floor (EL 9)

A heavy iron door decorated with bas-reliefs of an ancient six-armed warrior holding scimitars in each of its hands opens into a large tomb. Steps lead down to a U-shaped depression surrounding a slab of marble, upon which rests a stone sarcophagus. Its lid is missing.

This was the tomb of a great warrior chief known for fighting with a scimitar in both hands. His ferocity and prowess made it seem as if he had six arms and six swords.

The sarcophagus lid was inlaid with gold, silver, and precious gems. The robbers found it easier to simply carry the entire lid away rather than take it apart on site.

Trap: Tiny stone-eating vermin called stone grubs plague this part of the Mounds of Dawn. They devour stone as termites destroy wood. The shaded area of the map indicates an area of the crypt floor that has been weakened by their activities. PCs with the stonecunning racial ability may make a DC 15 Spot check to notice signs of weakened stonework. Otherwise, characters may make DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Craft (stonemasonry) checks to notice the possible danger.

Any weight of 50 pounds or more brought onto the shaded area causes the entire area to collapse into a 100-foot-deep chasm. Sharp, thin stalagmites jutting from the rocks below compound the danger of falling in.

100 ft. Deep Chasm with Sharp Stalagmites: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 100 ft. deep (10d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets in shaded area); sharp stalagmites (Atk +15 melee, 1d3 stalagmites per target for 1d6+5 damage each); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 25.

Development: Several small tunnels branch off from the bottom of this chasm. One is large enough for Medium-sized creatures to squeeze through to an adjacent cave from which a sickly green glow can be seen (area 16).

15. The Cult of Sehan (EL 12)

The iron door, similar to the other 3 from room 12, bears bas-relief warriors supplicating angels. A DC 10 Search of the door reveals that someone has carved tentacles and other alien aspects on the graven angels. It is unlocked.

Mold and sickly grayish-green lichen coat the walls and floor of this chamber, which clearly served as a huge crypt. An unpleasant green glow emanates from a pool of filthy slime and muck at the center of the crypt, from which a stone slab rises.

This crypt of an ancient Flan chieftain was looted long ago. Even the gem-encrusted sarcophagus was stolen.

Creatures: An incredibly obese, vaguely humanoid creature the size of a bugbear wallows in the pool. This is the self-proclaimed semi-divine being Kanuut, although he now calls himself The Embodiment of Sehan and the Great Bloated One. A suit of leather armor stretches tightly across his enormous girth, threatening to burst at the seams. Long, slime-coated tentacles protrude from his torso. Where his should have eyes, empty sockets leer across the room. Despite his bulk and appearance, great strength fortifies Kanuut's body, allowing him to move normally.

The slimy pool relaxes him and hydrates his sensitive skin. Kanuut can see for short distances, despite his lack of ocular organs. He acts as the spiritual leader of the adoring members of the Cult of Sehan. Kanuut draws his spiritual powers from alien beings beyond mortal comprehension, which he believes are super-evolved entities whose origins lie in the True Source below this room (area **16**).

A group of humans in dark robes with hoods drawn surround him in poses of fawning subservience, strings of green drool hanging from their mouths. These cultists are mainly simple folk from Exag. Their addiction to the sense of belonging resulting from the sehan drug has driven them to religious zealotry. They have just ingested sehan before the PCs enter, and bits of it hang from their mouths like strings of drool.

CULTISTS (9)
CR 1
NE Medium male and female human warrior 2
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common, Flan

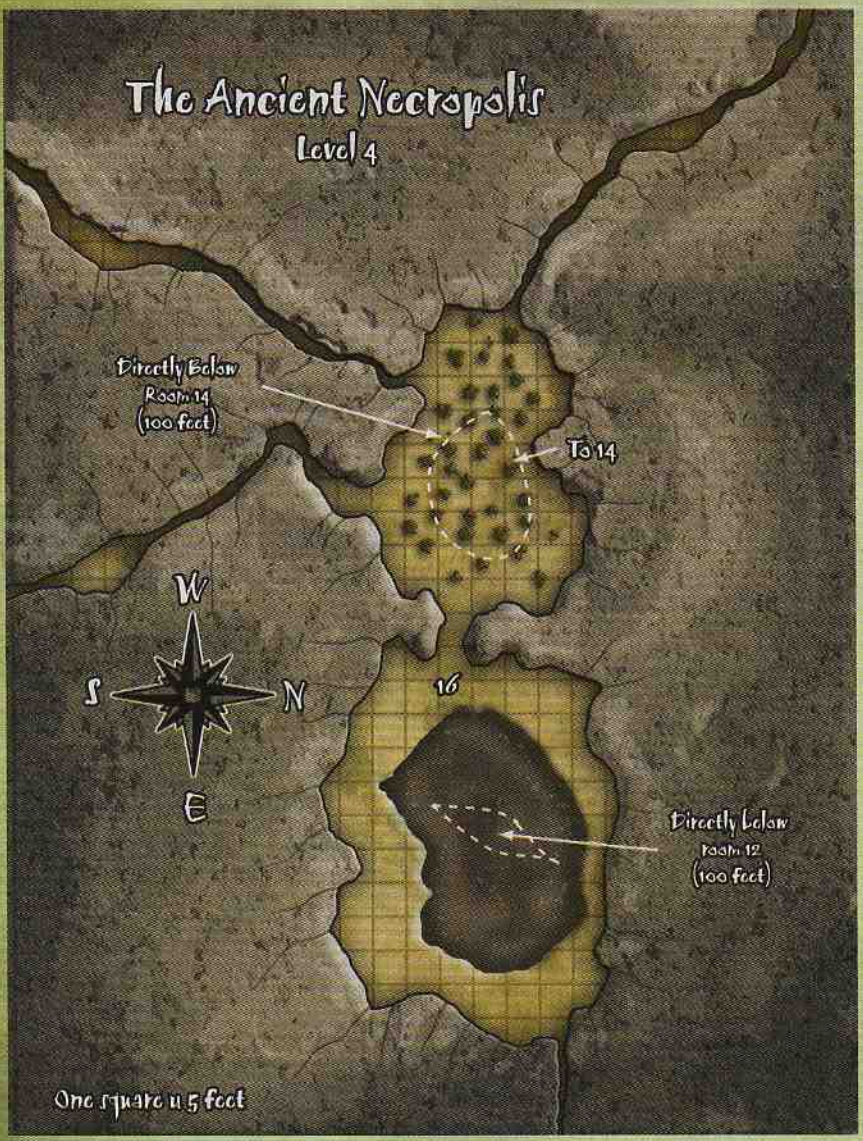
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12
hp 13 (2 HD)
Immune fear
Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft.
Melee club +6 (1d6+6)
Ranged dagger +4 (1d4+4/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +6
Atk Options Power Attack

Abilities Str 15 (currently 19), Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10 (currently 8), Wis 12 (currently 10), Cha 8
Feats Power Attack, Toughness
Skills Climb +6, Craft (any) +2, Intimidate +2, Jump +6, Swim +6
Possessions leather armor, club, dagger, black robes, 1d10 sp

KANUUT, THE GREAT BLOATED ONE, THE EMBODIMENT OF SEHAN **CR 9**
Male half-farspawn human cleric 7
CE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, native)
Lords of Madness 151
Init +0; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common, Flan

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 19
hp 84 (7 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune poison



Resist acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 17
Fort +12, **Ref** +2, **Will** +10

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +12 (1d6+6/19–20) and 2 tentacles +6 (1d6+3) or 4 tentacles +11 (1d6+6)
Ranged mwk dagger +5 (1d6+6/19–20)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +15
Atk Options true strike
Special Actions change shape, clarity of madness, rebuke undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+8)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th [CL 8th for evil spells]); +11 melee touch, +5 ranged touch)
4th—*confusion*[D] (DC 20), *freedom of movement*, *poison* (DC 19)
3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *create food and water*, *cure serious wounds*, *rage*[D]
2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *darkness*, (DC 18), *desecrate*[D], *enthrall* (DC 18), *hold person* (DC 18), *resist energy*
1st—*bless*, *bane* (DC 17), *cure light wounds* (2), *detect good*, *protection from good*[D], *shield of faith*
0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *guidance*
D Domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Madness
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; +10 melee touch)
3/day—*blink*, *blur*
1/day—*stinking cloud* (DC 14), *touch of idiocy* (DC 13)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 8, Wis 22, Cha 12
SQ secretion, spontaneous casting (inflict spells)
Feats Alertness, Willing Deformity: Obese (+2 Con +2 Intimidate, –2 Dex), Toughness, Willing Deformity (+2 Intimidate)
Skills Concentration +11, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Knowledge (religion) +3, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Listen +7, Spellcraft +3, Spot +7
Possessions *leather armor +2*, *ring of protection +2*, large masterwork dagger, *periapt of Wisdom +2*, *glove of storing*, silver unholy symbol (a mass of wavy tentacles splayed like a sunburst with a 10-pointed star at its center), spell component pouch, key to room 13

Change Shape (Su) As a standard action, Kanuut can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. This ability functions as described for the change shape ability (see page 306 of the *Monster Manual*). While in this form his movement modes do not change. He gains two extra tentacle attacks when making a full attack, is amorphous, cannot be flanked, and is not subject to extra damage from critical hits. Creatures native to the Material Plane take a –1 morale penalty on attack rolls against Kanuut while in his amorphous form.

Clarity of Madness (Ex) Kanuut has a –1 penalty on Will saves and Wisdom-based skill checks. Once per day, he can gain a +3 bonus on a single Will save or Wisdom-based check. He must choose to use this ability before the roll is made.

True Strike (Su) Once per day, Kanuut can make a normal attack with a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. He is not affected by the miss chance that applies to attacks against a concealed target while making this attack.

Secretion (Ex) Sehan constantly secretes a slimy, greenish-gray substance from his pores. This chemical is an addictive drug if ingested, though he is immune to its effects. See the Exposure to Sehan sidebar for details.

Tactics: If the PCs attack the children of Sehan in area 12, Kanuut prepares for combat by casting *freedom of movement* and *resist energy*. He casts *blink* on the first round of combat. The cultists draw their weapons as they move to surround the PCs and kill them. Kanuut targets the PCs with *confusion* and then uses *blindness* on whatever foe he deems the biggest threat. Thereafter, he exits the slime pool and closes for melee, casting *poison* and *touch of madness*.

The cultists fight to the death, high on Sehan and foolishly confident. However, Kanuut is wise enough to try to save himself through diplomacy, intimidation, or flight to the fissure outside of this room, where he climbs down to area **16** to make a last stand if necessary.

Treasure: A filthy iron coffer on the slab behind Kanuut contains 500 pp, 387 gp, 1,578 sp, a scroll of *remove blindness*, and 10 vials of Sehan.

Development: The glow in the water comes from an everburning torch Kanuut dropped in the water and hasn't bothered to retrieve. The large slab rising from the slimy pool is cluttered with stained parchment on which the Great Bloated One has written the chaotic ramblings of his ruined mind. Making sense of his insane writings requires a DC 15 Decipher Script check. Kanuut has begun using a crude mix of ancient Flan and alien symbols to represent his jumbled thoughts.

PCs that can understand the writings can make out several coherent sentences.

"The sweet Sehan sings to me. It fills my dreams with faraway images. I long to walk in the shadows of those great cyclopean monoliths..."

"I remember things... My name is... I am called—I cannot remember. Perhaps it will come to me. Sehan! No. Something before that..."

"I have seen those that walk in the bodies of others. They are all over the city. It's in the eyes. You must watch their eyes. I see you... Do you see me?"

"Maparrisi is missing. The body stealers have him. I know it! They would steal the Sehan from me! Ha! They will not have it!"

Most of this is just insane musings, though the body stealers reference hints at the yak folk. In recent weeks, Kanuut sent agents to the city in hopes of finding the drug dealers selling the cult's sacred sacrament. They never located the spriggan gang, but the Sehan they used allowed them to sense the dual nature of several yak folk body-melded with Exag citizens. His assertion that the spriggans wanted Sehan was unfounded, but true.

EXPOSURE TO SEHAN

Description: The raw form of Sehan has effects that are similar to Green Welcome, but much more potent. Unlike the weaker drug that is derived from it, Sehan can work through the skin, and need not be consumed, merely touched. It follows the standard rules for drugs detailed in Chapter 3 of the *Book of Vile Darkness*. Sehan has a save DC of 18, and like a posion has an inital and secondary effect. A character that voluntarily takes the drug automatically fails both saving throws.

Additionally, upon initial exposure (whether he takes the drug willingly or not), the character must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or become addicted. Once a character is additiced, he must take an additional dose of the drug at least once every two days, or begin to suffer withdrawl symptoms. Each day the character is in withdrawl, he must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 Dex, 1d6 Wis, and 1d2 Con damage. If, during the withdrawal period, a character makes two consecutive saves, he is freed of the addiction to the drug.

Type: Contact DC 18

Initial Effect: 1d6 points of Wisdom damage and 1d6 points of Intelligence damage.

Secondary Effect: 1d8+1 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 hour.

Price: 150 gp

Side Effects: Sehan fills the user with a feeling of strength, contentment, and belonging. While the drug is in effect, the user is immune to supernatural or magical fear effects and becomes numb to pain for 2d4 hours.

Overdose: A creature that is exposed to Sehan's effects more than once in a 48-hour period and fails its saving throw to resist either the initial or secondary effect undergoes a horrifying transformation into a near-mindless plant creature covered in glistening slime—a child of Sehan. It exists to protect and spread the influence of Sehan.

Addiction: High

DESTROYING THE TRUE SOURCE

A certain amount of danger lies in destroying the True Source. PCs with area of effect spells such as *fireball* or *flame strike* may be tempted to obliterate the pool from a distance. Such attacks cause the slime to evaporate, creating thick clouds of steam and vapor that fill the cavern and chamber above it (room 12) in 2 rounds, dissipating after 1d4 minutes. The vapor is full of poison that subjects the minds of living beings caught in it to infinite alien images and concepts that drive such beings mad. Treat the vapors as insanity mist (*Dungeon Master's Guide* page 297). This is a CR 6 dungeon hazard.

16. The True Source (EL 10)

A sickly glowing pool of semi-solid slime fills a deep chasm in the cavern floor. Root-like tendrils of glistening vegetable matter spread from the pool, climbing the walls up to an opening far above. The glow seems to pulsate as if alive.

A body dressed in dark robes lies face down on the cavern floor among the plant tendrils, a dagger in his back. A large wooden spoon covered in the strange slime lies near his body and several large glass bottles with corks in them rest along a nearby wall.

This is the True Source of Sehan. The plantlike roots growing out of it provide it with a rudimentary sense of its surroundings. Deposited here eons ago by alien beings beyond the scope of mankind's comprehension, the slimy substance has an unfathomable intelligence, but it cannot affect other creatures unless they are exposed to it directly. Thereafter, it exerts a strange empathic urge to join, grow, and propagate.

The body is that of a dead human cultist that accompanied the disguised Arghakot Annapuma down here to carry more Sehan from the pool back up to room 15. Once Arghakot had a bottle of the alien slime, he murdered the cultist and absconded with his prize into a nearby tunnel.

With a successful DC 15 Search of the area the PCs notice three important clues. First, an empty spot among the bottles indicates one was recently removed. Second, an impression in the thick, jelly-like slime of the pool shows where the yak folk body snatcher scooped some out. Third, tracks in the cavern floor and among the Sehan tendrils lead into the tunnel in the west wall and then into the tunnel in the south wall of the adjacent cavern. The tracks fade fast once they enter the southern tunnel, which soon branches into many tunnels that lead to unmapped areas of the Underdark. Arghakot used these tunnels to circle around to area 7 above and exit the necropolis with the sample.

The True Source of Sehan is a pool approximately 40 feet across and nearly 50 feet deep, which the PCs can destroy by dealing 150 points of fire, cold, or sonic damage to it. See the "Destroying the True Source" sidebar for more information.

Any PCs entering the Sehan pool must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save every round they stay in. Failure results in 1d6 Charisma damage as the character is filled with a feeling of "oneness" that slowly seeps into them. They must also make a DC 18 Will save or succumb to a *suggestion* spell that compels them to encourage their friends to enter the pool. Any creature reduced to 0 Charisma by this effect is transformed into a child of Sehan if it was humanoid, or a similar plant monster if not (see the stat block on page 31 for details).

Creatures: Ancient creatures called wystes have lurked beneath the surface of this pool for as long as it has existed—huge leech-like worms with tentacles surrounding their maws. They exist solely to defend the True Source from attack. They lazily swim beneath the surface of the alien slime, ready to attack anyone that harms the pool.

ADVANCED WYSTES (2) **CR 6**

NE Huge aberration

Monster Manual II 200

Init +5; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., Listen +6, Spot +6

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 17

hp 85 (9 HD)

Immune acid

Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Spd 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee 7 tentacle rakes +11 (1d6+6) or bite +14 (1d6+9 against a grappled foe only)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +20

Special Actions bite, improved grab

Abilities Str 22, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 1, Wis 11, Cha 8

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle rake), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (tentacle rake)

Skills Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +14

Bite (Ex) When a wyste grapples an opponent, its tentacles draw the victim to its toothed sucker hole. On the round after the wyste grabs, it makes a regular attack with its bite (in lieu of any tentacle rakes), gaining a +4 bonus on the attack roll. If the bite attack misses, the wyste drops the character, who falls prone in front of the creature. If the bite attack is successful, the wyste can then deal bite damage automatically every round thereafter, and the wyste is not considered grappled (although it cannot bite another creature). The victim can escape by winning an opposed grapple check, making a successful Escape Artist check against the wyste's grapple check result, or by killing the wyste.

Improved Grab (Ex) If a wyste hits a Large or smaller opponent with one or more tentacle attacks, it deal normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. The wyste gets a +2 bonus on its grapple check for each tentacle that hits beyond the first, but it can make only one grapple attack per round, no matter how many tentacles it devotes to the effort. Each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals damage for all the tentacles used to hold the opponent.

Tactics: In a primitive way, the True Source is aware of any threat to it. When the wystes sense the PCs, they rise to the surface of the pool and attack any creatures that have no Sehan in their system. They attempt to grapple foes and drag them down to the bottom of the pool, where they feed on them. Even if a foe escapes a wyste's grasp, it may still succumb to Sehan or drown. The wystes are too big to exit this cave.

Ad-hoc Experience Award: The EL for this encounter has been increased by 2 because of the added difficulty of combating the wystes in the Sehan pool, should they successfully drag PCs into it. If the PCs successfully destroy the True Source, give them a CR 10 experience award.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs can enjoy a moment to catch their breath once they have destroyed the Cult of Sehan and the strange alien slime called the True Source below the necropolis. However, they may still have to deal with more children of Sehan in Exag or groups of them gathering in the upper levels of the necropolis until the spread of Green Welcome has completely run its course.

With the writings they find in Kanuut's lair and the escape of the body melded yak folk agent Arghakot Annapuma, the PCs are still not completely finished with Sehan. Its unpredictable and alien nature makes it a serious threat in the wrong hands. Who can know what dire plans the inscrutable Yak Folk may have for it?

Should the PCs leave the necropolis without destroying the True Source, it won't take long for other curious creatures to become exposed to it, which inevitably leads to more trouble as the alien slime exerts its need to "join" with other beings.

If you plan to run "The Inscrutable Ones," the final installment in *The Seeds of Sehan*, the party's exodus from the necropolis embroils them immediately in the next adventure as they meet with attackers intent on removing them as a threat to the yak folks' plans.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Spawn of Sehan" is designed for a group of four 9th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 7th–8th-level characters or 10th–11th-level characters. Simply adjust all NPC character levels up or down as appropriate by a number equal to that which the average party level of your group deviates from 9.

7th–8th-level parties: Remove one of the chaos beasts from the encounter en route to Cair Pahor'an. Remove or decrease the choker's advanced HD. Change the hellfiend locust swarm trap to a burnt othur vapor or insanity mist vapor trap (*Dungeon Master's Guide* page 73) triggered by opening or breaking the urn. Remove one spectre from area **8** or replace them with a greater shadow. Remove half or all of the spider swarms. Lower the attack bonus of the scissoring falchions trap to +15. Reduce the number of children of Sehan in room **12** by one. Replace the mutated girallon with one or two normal girallons. Remove the sharpened stalagmites from the grub-weakened floor trap. Remove one of the wystes.

10th–11th-level parties: You can run this adventure as written with only minor changes. On the road to Cair Pahor'an add another chaos beast. Replace the choker with one or two more children of Sehan. Give Beldein 2–3 sorcerer levels with *ray of enfeeblement* as one of her known spells. Add a third *glyph of warding* trap. Replace the spectres with a dread wraith. Add two or three more spider swarms. Increase the number of children of Sehan in room **14** by one or two. Advance the mutated girallon to 10 HD. Finally, add an additional wyste to the True Source pool.

Stephen S. Greer is still grinding out a living in Las Vegas in the legal industry by day and creating new horrors for his gaming group by night. He and his wife April recently became parents to a beautiful baby girl named Alyssa.

Stefan Happ enjoys converting plant products into alcoholic beverages... a time-tested, if much slower, way to turn people into shambling mounds.

B. Matthew Conklin III: With his propensity for civil disobedience, and connections to certain unsavory green dragons, this native of the Metro Detroit area is surprised any of his fellow collaborators still talk to him.

Tom Ganz writes: "I'd like to thank my wife Veronica for giving me the freedom to play my favorite game as often as I find the time, and I hope I'll still have time for D&D when our baby will be with us in July 2006!"

Ashavan Doyon is a seventh-level secretary at a liberal arts college in New England. He lives in Massachusetts with his husband and their two pugs.

Savage Tide

Serpents of Scuttlecove

The vile city of Scuttlecove is the home of murderers, thieves, demon worshipers, peddlers of vice, and monsters. Here, anyone can find a place to hide, provided they can survive the terrors and dangers that infest the city streets. Scuttlecove is also the home port of the Crimson Fleet, a notorious band of pirates who have long held the Vohoun Ocean as their private looting grounds. The time has come to take the fight to these legendary pirates, to confront them in their own depraved lair.

"Serpents of Scuttlecove" is the eighth chapter in the Savage Tide Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures appearing in *Dungeon* magazine. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out *Dragon* magazine's monthly "Savage Tidings" articles, a series that helps players and DMs prepare for and expand upon the campaign. Issue #355 of *Dragon* magazine features several additional locations the PCs might wish to visit during their stay in the city of Scuttlecove.

The PCs should be 15th level when they begin "Serpents of Scuttlecove." They should gain enough experience to advance to 16th level halfway through the adventure, and 17th by the end.

BY RICHARD PETT
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ADVENTURE PATH | HIGH LEVEL (13TH–20TH) | URBAN

Adventure Background

Growing up, Vanthus Vanderboren and his sister Lavinia were quite close. With their parents rarely around, the pair got into a fair amount of trouble. After one particularly complex prank involving several *elixirs of love* emptied into the nearby water tower, both of their childhoods came to a sudden end. Lavinia was sent to a prestigious finishing school in an attempt to teach her decorum and grace, while Vanthus was sent south to work on a plantation owned by his Uncle Kallum, a life-long bachelor who subscribed to the notion that strong character was forged in the crucible of hard and honest work.

With each day of unrewarding toil and unfair (from his point of view) punishment, Vanthus's resentment toward his uncle grew. He tried several times to run away, but Kallum's servants were too quick and always caught him. It was on one of these attempts to escape that Vanthus discovered a secret door in the plantation house and blundered into his uncle's secret study. As it happened, Kallum was also a retired adventurer and member of the secret society of treasure hunters known as the Seekers. Vanthus spent an hour exploring the large study, and became particularly obsessed with a reproduction of a large woodcut depicting a four-armed demon tearing apart an old man. The reproduction was of a page from the *Demonomicon of Iggwilv*, and had been framed and hung on the wall above a small plaque that read, "General Ghorvash Honors His Prisoner." Yet Kallum's greatest treasure was, without a doubt, a beautiful *book of infinite spells*, its white leather cover festooned with gems and its pages edged with gold. Vanthus was drawn to the book as if entranced. He opened it, and as the knowledge of the spell on the front page bloomed in his mind, Vanthus knew true power for the first time. Heedless of his actions, he greedily began flipping pages through the book, marveling at spell after spell until he reached the book's final page and the *gate* spell inscribed therein. Amazed by the spell's power, he immediately set about using the *book of infinite spells* to call upon the powerful monster named Ghorvash from the picture on the wall.

The greatest error in Vanthus' life was his foolish assumption that the spell would allow him to control the demon.

As Vanthus cast the spell, the page turned on its own. The demon appeared in a flash of noxious smoke and immediately realized that the one who had called him was ignorant. He menaced the horrified youth for a moment, then adopted a pose of subservience and informed the boy that he would grant him one wish. Vanthus quickly regained his composure and wished for wealth, power, and eternal life in one breath. It was at that point that Uncle Kallum, drawn by the sound of the demon's laughter, entered the study. Ghorvash stunned the shocked man into senselessness, then turned to Vanthus and told him that, in order for his wish to be granted, blood had to be spilled. Vanthus didn't hesitate. With sick glee, he slit his uncle's throat and threw the body to the glabrezu for his enjoyment. Ghorvash roared in appreciation and vanished, the seeds of his work sewn.

Yet Vanthus felt betrayed—the demon had not granted the youth's wish. Enraged at the demon and horrified that the murder of his uncle would be discovered, Vanthus set fire to the plantation and watched from the nearby fields as the building burned to the ground.

After the fire, Vanthus returned to live at the family manor in Sasserine, but he told no one of his bargain with Ghorvash. A year later, when he suddenly became rich, he assumed it was because his plan to carry out the murder of his parents and then rob the family vault went off without a hitch. He had no way of knowing that Ghorvash's agents lurked in the shadows to ensure that Vanthus's parents and their crew would fail in their attempts to put out the fire. When Vanthus gained great power by becoming a lemorian captain in the Crimson Fleet, he told himself it was his glib tongue and charming personality that won him over. He never guessed that Ghorvash had already arranged for his swift ascencion through the fleet's ranks. It wasn't until after Vanthus died at the hands of his sister's guardians that he realized that Ghorvash had made good on his wish. He had become rich after robbing his dead parents' vault, powerful after becoming a lemorian captain in the Crimson Fleet, and now, as Ghorvash dragged Vanthus's squirming soul before his master, the Prince of Demons, Vanthus had eternal life. Of a sort.

Demogorgon knew of Vanthus, and more importantly knew of his ties to his enemies. He realized that here was a soul who would certainly stand against those who were even then disrupting his aspect's work on the Isle of Dread. And so Demogorgon consumed Vanthus's soul, transforming it and then returning it to the Material Plane. Vanthus rose from his grave as a death knight, and with the transformation realized how the final part of his wish to Ghorvash had been fulfilled. What's more, as a death knight, Vanthus finally had the strength and power to take his sister and bend her to his unholy desires.

Adventure Synopsis

After defeating the koprus of Golismorga and the City of Broken Idols, the PCs discover that a disturbing number of *shadow pearls* have already been shipped to Scuttlecove. Worse, upon returning to Farshore, they find Lavinia abducted, stolen away to the same city by her brother Vanthus, now an undead menace. The PCs travel to Scuttlecove, and on the way are contacted by an old acquaintance—Harliss Javell, whom they last saw in the smuggler's caves of Kraken's Cove. She asks them to meet her at a place called Red Foam Whaling in Scuttlecove, whereupon she'll do what she can to aid them

When the PCs reach Red Foam Whaling, they are ambushed by yuan-ti. The party discovers that Harliss has been captured by the Seventh Coil, and in order to find out what happened to Lavinia, they'll need to first rescue Harliss. Their search takes them through the streets of the depraved city, and forces them to make allies to survive. From their new allies, they learn that Harliss is being kept in a notorious local building called the Birdcage. After they rescue her, the party learns that the headquarters of the Crimson Fleet is hidden, but that the secret to its location may be kept in a yuan-ti safehouse.

After discovering the location of the Fleet's base, the PCs travel there and learn that Lavinia has been transported to a prison on Gaping Maw, Demogorgon's Abyssal realm. They also discover the true extent of the dozens of *shadow pearls* the pirates have already distributed to the cities of the world, and that Demogorgon intends to trigger a simultaneous detonation of the *shadow pearls*, plunging these cities into madness for unknown reasons. There's no time to travel to the dozens of cities and remove the *shadow pearls*—the only way to stop this demonic plan is to disrupt the ceremony itself on the Abyss.

Adventure Hooks

If you're running "Serpents of Scuttlecove" as its own adventure, you can simply have "Lavinia" be any one of the PCs' already-established allies. In this case, they travel to the city only to rescue their old friend, who has been abducted by her estranged brother, Captain Wyther. In this variant, Lavinia should be hidden somewhere in the Wreck, perhaps in area **I5** under the Seventh's watchful eyes.

Alternately, you could begin this adventure with the PCs arriving at Scuttlecove on a mission to cripple or destroy the Crimson Fleet. Their contact remains Harliss, who has information on how to find the Crimson Fleet base. In this variant, the PCs must locate the Wreck and slay Cold Captain Wyther in order to achieve victory.

PART ONE: A BROTHER'S REVENGE

At some point during the PCs' adventures in "City of Broken Idols," something monstrous occurs just outside of the walls of Farshore. In a lonely grave at the edge of the Farshore Cemetery, evil wakes in the decaying flesh of a dead man. When Demogorgon transforms Vanthus into a death knight, his corrupted soul returns to the Material Plane, a thing of fiendish hatred that animates his decaying body. Vanthus claws his way up through the soggy earth and finally realizes what has happened. Enraged, horrified, and intrigued at his new unlife, Vanthus is unsure of his powers, without his gear, and nervous that the PCs (who have killed him once before) are still nearby. As such, he wastes no time fleeing Farshore by calling upon a nightmare mount to carry him to the nearby abandoned pirate outpost of Rat's End. He then uses the nightmare's *astral projection* ability to enter the astral plane and emerge back on the Material Plane at the Crimson Fleet fortress near Scuttlecove.

Now deadlier than even Cold Captain Wyther, Vanthus has little problem commandeering the Crimson Fleet's resources. The death knight gathers a group of bar-lgura recruiters (see page 79), gives them a reliable description of the abandoned village, and as they teleport there he has his nightmare end the *astral projection*. It only takes a few hours for the death knight and his bar-lgura minions to return to Farshore, storm Lavinia's manor, abduct her, and teleport back to Scuttlecove. Once there, Vanthus takes Cold Captain Wyther's ship, the *Crimson Scar*, and sails with it, Lavinia, and a drafted crew to the Abyssal realm of Gaping Maw by using the *Crimson Scar's wakeportal*.

These events occur before the PCs return to Farshore after defeating Khala the Two-Headed in the previous adventure. Without a way to easily contact the PCs, the people of Farshore are forced to wait for them to return to relate the tragic news.

Return to Farshore

Upon their return to Farshore, the PCs immediately notice that Vanderboren Manor has been damaged by a fire. The manor still stands, but the roof on the northern face (just above Lavinia's bedchamber) has burned away, leaving a large hole that laborers are repairing. It shouldn't take long for the citizens of the colony to bombard the PCs with tales of Vanthus's attack on the manor. The frightened citizens tell of his burning steed, his demonic ape minions, and most of all of the fact that he looked dead yet was still horrifically alive. Some of the colonists even caught a glimpse of the demon apes carrying Lavinia from her burning manor, and they claim that the monsters were branded with the mark of the Crimson Fleet. Many more heard Vanthus's greeting to Lavinia just before he, the demons, and Lavinia vanished from sight: "It is time for you to love me again, sister. The Lord of the Crimson Fleet can awaken it in you when I bring you before him. Your time here is over."

The colony is in a state of quiet panic, unsure if the undead Vanthus plans on returning to burn more buildings, or if his appearance heralds the imminent arrival of more Crimson Fleet pirates. Some colonists have taken to boarding themselves in their homes, others talk about moving into the surrounding jungle to hide out, and still others talk of abandoning the colony entirely. Lord Manthalay Meravanchi is sponsoring this latest tactic, and has been rallying his supporters to lay claim to the boats in the Farshore harbor to mount a return to Sasserine. The amount of help your PCs wish to provide in calming the citizens down is up to them, but if they wish to convince the colonists to remain in Farshore, perhaps promising that they'll go rescue Lavinia and ensuring them that the Crimson Fleet has no interest in the colony, they'll need to make a DC 30 Diplomacy check to assuage their worries. If Lord Meravanchi gets involved in arguing against them, the PCs must also oppose his +10 Diplomacy check with their own check.

Investigation of Vanderboren Manor turns up no additional clues, although none of Lavinia's gear (including a suit of *+1 leather armor*, a *+1 rapier*, a *ring of protection +1*, *gloves of Dexterity +2*, and a *cloak of resistance +1*, in addition to any other items the PCs may have given her over the past few adventures) was taken when she was. An investigation of Vanthus's grave reveals a hole in the earth, left empty from when Vanthus clawed his way out. The grave radiates lingering evil, but there are no real clues here. If the PCs wish to learn more of Lavinia's fate, they'll either need to resort to divination magic or seek out the Crimson Fleet. It's no secret that the Crimson Fleet is based in Scuttlecove, and if the PCs captured Throgiff the tiefling in the last adventure, he can not only confirm this fact, but can even be made to serve as a guide if properly intimidated, bribed (with at

Farewell to the Jade Ravens

If the Jade Ravens have played a strong role in your Savage Tide campaign, "Serpents of Scuttlecove" gives you a great place to wrap up their storyline. When Vanthus abducts Lavinia, Tolun Kientai convinces his adventuring companions that this is their big chance to show up "those other heroes." The Jade Ravens commander the *Blue Nixie*, gather a crew of other outraged sailors, and set sail to Scuttlecove to rescue Lavinia soon after Vanthus abducts her. As long as the Jade Ravens leave for Scuttlecove a few days before the PCs do, they get to the city before them and have plenty of time to meet their own dire fates. Details on these fates appear later in the adventure. This variant works best if the PCs end up taking the *Sea Wyvern* to Scuttlecove; if they utilize spells to travel there faster, they'll reach the city well in advance of the Jade Ravens, at which point you'll need to make adjustments as necessary. In any event, the final four installments of the Savage Tide Adventure Path assume that the Jade Ravens have left the stage.

least 1,000 gp), or convinced (with a DC 30 Diplomacy check).

Finding Out More

By interrogating Throgiff or any Crimson Fleet pirates captured at the end of "Tides of Dread," the PCs can learn a bit more about what the Crimson Fleet is up to in Scuttlecove. Throgiff's ledger (found in area 24 in "City of Broken Idols") also reveals that the Crimson Fleet has already stockpiled 35 *shadow pearls* at their base of operations near Scuttlecove, but where that base is located and what they intend to do with the *shadow pearls* is unclear.

Divination magic can reveal more. As a general rule, you should use the results of any such magic employed by the PCs to guide them toward the next section of the adventure, depending on when they utilize the spells. At the start, results should lead them to Scuttlecove. Once they've survived the ambush at Red Foam Whaling and start looking for Harliss, results should lead them to the Birdcage, and so on. There are certain things to keep in mind, though, when revealing information to the PCs via divination spells.

Discern Location: The PCs might use this spell to determine Vanthus's or Lavinia's location. The result depends on when during the adventure the spell is cast. At the start, Lavinia and Vanthus are in the Crimson Fleet's stronghold on the island of Sekorvia in the Vohoun Ocean on the Material Plane. A DC 30 Knoweldge (geography) check reveals Sekorvia to be the largest island in the Pirate Isles; if the PCs have interrogated Throgiff or looked though his ledger, this becomes a DC 10 Knowledge (geography) check. By the time the PCs actually reach Scuttlecove, though, Vanthus has commandeered the *Crimson Scar* and traveled to Gaping Maw on the Abyss, and not long thereafter reaches the prison isle of Divided's Ire, a place where Demogorgon himself blocks *discern location* spells.

Scrying: *Scrying* attempts on Vanthus or Lavinia at the start of the adventure fail automatically, as the Crimson Fleet stonghold is warded by a permanent *Mordenkainen's private sanctum*. Once the Vanderborens relocate to Gaping Maw, they gain a +5 bonus on their Will save to resist *scrying* (since they're on another plane), but if successful, *scrying* reveals a rag-draped and badly beaten Lavinia in an iron cage dangling over a bubbling pool of lava. If Vanthus is scried upon, he is revealed to be brooding in an iron-walled room and surrounded by several disembodied demonic shadows. Further information on their fates is revealed in "Into the Maw" in DUNGEON #147.

Getting to Scuttlecove

Scuttlecove lies about 1,200 miles northeast of the Isle of Dread, a 16-day journey by sea if the PCs take the *Sea Wyvern*. The voyage to Scuttlecove should be relatively uneventful—most of the encounters with sea monsters, bad weather, and other perils should be relatively minor to a party of 15th-level PCs.

Of course, a party of 15th-level characters has a lot more options available to them for travel. Spells like *wind walk*, *shadow walk*, *greater teleport*, and *transport via plant* can all serve to greatly speed the journey. Yet the remainder of this adventure (as well as the final four adventures in the Savage Tide Adventure Path) assume that the PCs do not abandon the *Sea Wyvern*. So, how do you convince your players to take the long way to Scuttlecove?

As the PCs prepare to travel to Scuttlecove, you should determine their method of approaching the city. As detailed in Part Two of this adventure and in the accompanying backdrop, Scuttlecove is a dangerous place, especially for visitors. Although the PCs are high-level, they can't simply walk into a place like Scuttlecove—they need a cover or stealth. Disguising the *Sea Wyvern* as a Crimson Fleet ship is certainly an option. By bringing the *Sea Wyvern*, they also gain an entire ship's cargo to store gear, equipment, and treasure. They should think about where they'll be staying in Scuttlecove; the city's hardly a safe place to sleep, even if you pay for a room at an inn. The *Sea Wyvern* can easily serve as a portable stronghold for the PCs to retreat to, especially if they moor her in a secluded cove elsewhere on Sekorvia or a nearby island. Finally, you can stress the fact that if the PCs elect to leave the *Sea Wyvern* at Farshore, someone like Lord Manthalay Meravanchi is likely to steal the ship to flee back to Sasserine.

If the PCs use divination magic, you should take the opportunity to attempt to convey to them that, while Lavinia's abduction is tragic, there's not a particularly pressing need to rescue her immediately.

Harliss Javell's Message

In "The Bullywug Gambit," the PCs encountered a foul-mouthed pirate captain named Harliss Javell. At the end of that encounter, the PCs should have made a Diplomacy check to determine how she reacted to them. If the PCs made a favorable impression on her by adjusting her attitude to friendly or helpful, they'll have one additional resource to draw upon in this adventure. "Serpents of Scuttlecove" assumes that the PCs left her with such a favorable impression.

After leaving Kraken's Cove, Harliss was filled with rage at the Crimson Fleet. They had not fully divulged to her the dangers of transporting *shadow pearls*,

and she blamed them for the death of her crew and her friends at Kraken's Cove. As she traveled on foot along the Amedio Coast away from Sasserine, the need for revenge against the Crimson Fleet grew into an obsession. Eventually, she came to the secluded beach that Vanthus had used to stage his arrival in the region. He left behind several skiffs (he'd lost some of his men in the chaos at Kraken's Cove and didn't have enough left to return all of the skiffs to his ship after he fled the area), one of which Harliss claimed. She eventually made her way to a Scarlet Brotherhood fort and managed to fast talk her way onto a larger ship bound for civilization. Yet her true goal remained Scuttlecove—after witnessing what one *shadow pearl* was capable of, and knowing that the Crimson Fleet had more of them, she was curious to find out what they were up to.

It took several months, but eventually Harliss arrived in the depraved city. She began investigating the Crimson Fleet, and after several close calls with Dire Hunger monks and bar-lgura press gangs, she attracted the attention of a group of rebels who called themselves the Protectorate.

With the Protectorate's support, Harliss learned much about the fleet, and came close to discovering the location of their secret hideout. While spying on a band of Crimson Fleet pirates on a ship visiting Scuttlecove, she overheard the news that Vanthus Vanderboren had returned from the dead and brought his captured sister to the base. The news shocked Harliss, who had thought she'd seen the last of the Vanderborens, and also made her recall the adventurers she'd met back in Kraken's Cove. If they were still allied with Lavinia, perhaps they would assist in realizing her revenge.

Harliss' decision to contact the PCs sent her in search of someone capable of such magic. Her contacts at the Protectorate couldn't help her directly, but they did point her to one of their more sinister allies, a half-fiend nymph named Tyralandi. With her aid and the use of a scroll of *dream*, Harliss seeks to contact the PCs..

Harliss Javell

This *dream* message can arrive at any time you wish, and should be sent to one of the PCs who was present when they encountered Harliss back in "The Bullywug Gambit." Harliss' dream initially manifests in the mind of the sleeping PC as a memory of the events in Kraken's Cove. As the PC and his allies hew their way through throngs of savage pirates, they suddenly encounter Harliss again. Yet this time, she is not holding out against her own siege. Instead, she greets the PCs with a smile and an offer of allegiance. She explains that she has come to Scuttlecove for realize vengeance against the Crimson Fleet, and that she recently discovered that a mutual acquaintance has returned to them. Her reports of Vanthus as an undead monster with Lavinia as a prisoner should provide the PCs with the last bit of urging they need to journey to Scuttlecove. In any event, Harliss promises them her aid and the aid of the Protectorate in rescuing Lavinia, as long as she's able to help lay the Crimson Fleet low as part of the process. If they have a ship, she recommends leaving it in any one of several secluded harbors on a nearby island so that it can serve as a safe place to stage their infiltration. Alternately, if they're feeling deceptive, they can pose as Crimson Fleet pirates come to the city to unload cargo. She bids them meet her at a place in Scuttlecove called "Red Foam Whaling."

After the dream ends, the PCs can certainly attempt to contact Harliss with their own magic to gain further information, but as they near Scuttlecove, attempts to contact her fail as she is captured by agents of the Crimson Fleet and imprisoned in the Birdcage. By the time the PCs reach Red Foam Whaling, it is no longer a Protectorate safe house—it has become a deadly yuan-ti ambush.

Sailing to Scuttlecove

If the PCs sail the *Sea Wyvern* to Scuttlecove, there are countless small coves on the tiny islands that fill the region that can serve as excellent places to hide their ship. They can then use skiffs, magic, or other means to come

and go from Scuttlecove with relative safety. The city's landward gates are imposing but unmanned—no one opposes (or even notices) a small group entering the city by these routes.

If the PCs wish to pose as a Crimson Fleet mercenary ship come to the city to unload a cargo of loot, they need only fly a crimson flag as they approach the harbor. Navigating the maze of sunken ships is a difficult task without accurate charts (see apge 82). If the PCs think ahead, they can secure such charts from any Crimson Fleet ships they captured at the end of "Tides of Dread."

Once a ship reaches a pier and docks, its crew is expected to handle unloading and bartering stolen goods on their own—there's no organized port authority or harbormaster to aid in this matter. It's unlikely that anyone notices if a ship with a crimson flag docks at a pier and never bothers to unload cargo, but if the PCs don't leave guards behind on deck, there's a cumulative 10% chance per hour that the *Sea Wyvern* is stolen by a band of 1d6+6 Scuttlecove thugs.

PART TWO: CITY OF CHAOS

War. No one mentions the word, but everyone who lives in Scuttlecove knows. The city is locked in civil war.

Details on the city of Scuttlecove and the six factions currently involved in the war can be found in the backdrop article that begins on page 76 of this issue. High-level characters have a wealth of options available to them, so rather than having a pre-scripted set of encounters to walk them through the adventure, you should be prepared to allow them to explore the city as they will. "Serpents of Scuttlecove" assumes the PCs have three goals in the city: rescue Lavinia, discover the plans for the *shadow pearls*, and destroy the Crimson Fleet. The route they take to accomplishing these tasks is left to each particular party. This section provides specific guidelines on what the PCs have to do to get by in Scuttlecove, and the best ways to realize these goals, but you should be ready to think on your feet if the PCs come up with something unpredictable.

A Fish Out of Water

Scuttlecove is not a place for kindness or weakness. As detailed in the Scuttlecove backdrop, visitors to the city can expect to be assaulted by thugs, bar-lgura press gangs, monks of Dire Hunger, and other menaces if they don't carry themselves with confidence. Characters who openly walk the streets of Scuttlecove can use Intimidate or Disguise checks to prevent these attacks. Magic can be an incredible boon for the stealthy infiltration of the city—invisible parties, for example, are unlikely to attract much attention.

It's quite likely that the PCs can gain the favor of one or more of the factions during the course of this adventure. As detailed, they are most likely to gain the support of Porphyry House, although they could also ally with the Dealer's Consortium or even the Monastery of Dire Hunger once the factions hear rumors of the PCs' opposition of the Seventh Coil or the Crimson Fleet (automatic 1d4 days after they defeat the yuan-ti at Red Foam Whaling or rescue Harliss from the Birdcage). Once the party has allied with one of these three factions, they no longer need to worry about the idle dangers of Scuttlecove, as word spreads quickly.

Asking Around

As soon as the PCs begin asking about Lavinia, the Crimson Fleet, or the Seventh Coil, agents of the latter two take notice. Unless the PCs beat a DC by 10 or more when they use Gather Information in the city, it's only a matter of 3d6 hours before the Crimson Fleet or the Seventh Coil finds out. Once this occurs, these two factions use divination magic and their own contacts to quickly determine who's been asking questions. Unless the PCs have taken extraordinary means to conceal their presence, their activities become the object of scrutiny. Groups of 1d4+2 Scuttlecove thugs (page 78) paid off by the Crimson Fleet trail the PCs at times. A Sister of Lamentation (page 56) might follow their travels through the city along the rooftops. Cold Captain Wyther is certain to attempt to scry on the PCs, their cohorts, or even their animal companions using the *crystal ball* in area **H4**. Allow the PCs standard chances to notice this unwanted attention, but even if they confront their stalkers and defeat them, there's always another group of thugs or a harpy ready to take up the slack.

Open Warfare

A 15th-level group wields incredible power, so it's not unlikely that some parties might approach Scuttlecove with a less-than-subtle attitude. Certainly the rank-and-file thugs and criminals who populate the city can't withstand a group capable of teleporting, raising the dead, creating earthquakes, and summoning armies of elementals and outsiders. Yet while the PCs may have power, an open assault on Scuttlecove will actually make their task in town more difficult, since the leaders of the various factions rise up to defend their city. At the very least, soon after the PCs attack Scuttlecove, they'll find themselves facing Tyralandi and six stone golems made of porphyry, Kedward Bone and his four barbed devil guardians, a flock of six Sisters of Lamentation, the Leech, and several waves of Crimson recruiters, Dire Hunger monks, and yuan-ti assassins and slavers. At minimum, this is an EL 22 encounter, and likely one that the PCs can't hope to win. Furthermore, once they adopt such an aggressive tactic, they find Scuttlecove uncharacteristically focused in their defense—eventually the Seventh and Cold Captain Wyther become involved in the defense of the city as well. It's possible that the PCs could stage several assaults on Scuttlecove and eventually whittle down the city's defenses, at which point they may be able to find out enough information to progress, but further details on such an inefficient and unnecessary attack are beyond the scope of this adventure.

Safe Places to Rest

Scuttlecove's a dangerous place to visit, and an even more dangerous place to relax. If the PCs brought the *Sea Wyvern*, it represents their best choice as a place to retreat to when they need to rest and recover. If they hide their ship in a nearby cove, the only thing they have

to worry about is assassination attempts (see below). If their ship is moored in the Scuttlecove harbor, they'll also have to deal with curious thugs and perhaps opportunistic bar-lgura press gangs.

Once the PCs rescue Harliss, she'll be able to lead them to one of two Protectorate safe houses (one in Eralakni's Emporium and another at the Rusty Shunt); these locations are safe from all forms of interruption save assassination attempts.

If the characters decide to sleep in an abandoned building or risk paying for a room in one of Scuttlecove's flophouses or "inns," you should check three times a night to determine if someone or something interrupts their rest. There's a 15% chance of an encounter with a group of 1d6+6 Scuttlecove thugs, a band of 2d4 Crimson recruiters, 1d6+4 Dire Hunger monks, or one of the many monstrous predators that dwell in Scuttlecove's shadows (such as vampires, rakshasas, evil outsiders, night hags, and doppelgangers).

Assassination Attempts

As the PCs attract the attention of the Crimson Fleet and the Seventh Coil, they become increasingly concerned with the party's actions. It won't take long for the groups to send out assassins in an attempt to quiet the PCs once and for all. Listed below are two brief encounters you can use against the PCs whenever the action seems to be lagging or you feel that they're taking too long to progress.

Minting House Murderers (EL 13): Underestimating the PCs' strength, two yuan-ti asssassins from the Minting House attempt to impress the Seventh by killing them. The yuan-ti assassins attack at night, in an uncrowded place where they can observe the PCs for three rounds before opening combat with death attacks. Ideally, they seek to catch the PCs as they sleep. If this is not possible, they stalk the PCs through the streets and attack soon after they stop to shop or interrogate a local. These yuan-ti are not here to get killed, and in the face of strong opposition flee via the rooftops back to the Minting House

Seventh Coil Assassins (2) **CR 11**

Yuan-ti halfblood rogue 2/assassin 7
CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 264

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect poison*, scent; Listen +18, Spot +18

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Yuan-ti

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 19; improved uncanny dodge

hp 95 (107 with *false life*, 16 HD)

SR 16

Fort +7 (+10 against poison), **Ref** +16, **Will** +10; evasion

Spd 30 ft.

Melee *+1 keen dagger* +19/+14/+9 (1d4+5/17–20) and bite +13 (1d6+2 plus poison)

Ranged *+2 composite longbow* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+6/×3) or spit venom +18 touch (DC 15, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con)

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +17

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +5d6

Special Actions death attack (DC 22)

Combat Gear *bead of force, potion of cure serious wounds, potion of fly*

Spells Known (CL 7th)

4th (1/day)—*dimension door, modify memory* (DC 19)

3rd (3/day)—*deeper darkness, false life, misdirection*

2nd (4/day)—*cat's grace, invisibility, pass without trace, spider climb*

1st (5/day)—*feather fall, jump, obscuring mist, true strike*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

At will—*alternate form, chameleon power, detect poison, produce acid*

3/day—*animal trance* (DC 14), *cause fear* (DC 13), *entangle* (DC 13)

1/day—*deeper darkness, neutralize poison* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 15)

Abilities Str 18, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 21, Wis 18, Cha 14

SQ poison use, trapfinding

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Mobility, Spit Venom, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +21, Concentration +12, Craft (poisonmaking) +15, Disguise +19, Hide +24 (+34 when using *chameleon power*, +42 when also in Tiny viper form), Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +15, Listen +18, Move Silently +24, Spot +15, Tumble +24

Possessions combat gear, *+1 mithral shirt, +1 keen dagger, +2 composite longbow* (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +3*

Poison (Ex) Injury and contact, Fortitude DC 15, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con.

Spit Venom This feat (*Serpent Kingdoms* 147) allows the Seventh Coil assassin to spit its venom up to 30 feet as a ranged touch attack. The poison functions as a contact poison in addition to its usual delivery method. This requires a standard action.

The Gloves Come Off (EL 16): The second time the yuan-ti attempt to assassinate the PCs, they come prepared, recruiting the aid of an intimidated local cutpurse called Borwill. Borwill's task is to approach the heroes and keep them occupied with his offers of cheap magical trinkets for sale (rings and wands with *Nystul's magic aura*) while the yuan-ti move silently into position around them and ready the attack. The assassins have organized a group of 6 bar-lgura recruiters for additional aid—these demons use *disguise self* to appear humanoid and constitute the six closest "pedestrians" when the assault begins. Borwill has +8 Bluff and may attempt to secretly deliver a warning if he feels the party can take the yuan-ti. If two yuan-ti assassins are slain, the others flee into the city in different directions.

Seventh Coil Assassins (4): hp 107 each; see page 49.

Crimson Recruiters (6): hp 88 each; see page 79.

Exploring the City

As the PCs wander through Scuttlecove, consult the backdrop article as needed. Certain locations in Scuttlecove contain additional information and encounters pertinent to this adventure, as detailed below.

The Waterfront: Anyone who spends much time here soon hears tales of the numerous horrible fish that have been found washed up on shore or caught by fishermen lately. The locals have taken to calling these fish "sackfish." The sackfish are bloated bags of vaguely luminescent flesh, studded here and there with fins and featuring horrific double fish heads.

Sackfish have a disturbing penchant for bursting if handled roughly, poisoning anyone nearby (treat as yellow mold—*Dungeon Master's Guide* 76). Securing a sackfish for study is a relatively easy task. A DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) made while studying a sackfish reveals that these fish are fiendish creatures common on the 88th layer of the Abyss, a place known as Gaping Maw. These fish have become common in these waters due to the frequent voyages Crimson Fleet ships make to Gaping Maw using *wakeportals*.

Plaza of Hanging Ruin: If you're using the Jade Ravens subplot, a DC 25 Spot check made by any PC who visits the Plaza of Hanging Ruin is enough to notice a familiar face—poor **Kaskus Kiel** (LN male dwarf druid 9) hangs rotting from the plaza's hooks, his flesh alive with flies and maggots. He has obviously been dead for some time. If he's resurrected, he tells how he and his fellow Ravens came to Scuttlecove with ideas of rescuing Lavinia, only to run afoul of a band of yuan-ti assassins not long after they started asking questions. Kaskus was with Zan Oldavin when he was jumped by assassins; Tolin and Liamae were following up on a different lead at the time and he has no idea what happened to them. Zan, he fears, is dead; he was taken away to someplace called "The Minting House" for "recruitment." The yuan-ti didn't seem to have an interest in Kaskus, and left him here to die.

Porphyry House: If the PCs visit Scuttlecove's most infamous brothel, they are greeted by an overly pleasant and attractive staff eager to please. Attempts to arrange meetings with the house's owner Tyralandi require a DC 40 Diplomacy check (or a bribe of at least 5,000 gp in jewelry or 10,000 gp in magic). Tyralandi has no love for the Crimson Fleet, and provided the PCs can present themselves in a properly deferential manner (requiring a second DC 40 Diplomacy check or a DC 40 Perform [any] check to entertain her), she may be willing to aid them in their actions against the Crimson Fleet if they promise to stand aside when she moves to fill the vacuum left by the Fleet's defeat. If the PCs present Harliss' note (recovered from the Leech's lair in Part Three), they gain a +20 bonus on their checks to secure Tyralandi's aid. If they ask about Harliss, she admits that the woman came to her several days ago with a request to have a *dream* spell cast upon her. The money was good, and Tyralandi admits to having a soft spot in her heart for female swashbucklers. She used one of Porphyry Houses' many scrolls of *dream* (used often to grant unusual requests by paying customers) on Harliss, but doesn't know what message she sent with the spell. As an aside, Tyralandi adds that she knows where Harliss is now. For payment for this information, she asks only for a lock of hair from the PC with the highest Charisma (Tyralandi intends to use a scroll of *simulacrum* to create a minion based on the character for her own personal amusement—this development could come back later in the adventure to cause all manner of amusing plot developments). If paid, she admits that she's heard through her extensive network of contacts that Harliss has recently been taken to the Birdcage, no doubt by enemies eager to learn something she knows. Tyralandi's fondness for female swashbucklers isn't enough for her to risk upsetting the tenuous allegiance Porphyry House shares with the Birdcage, but if the PCs indicate that they intend a rescue, she opens a nearby drawer and gives the PCs a leather pouch containing three *oils of silence*. If the PCs ask what they're for, she smiles coyly and feigns ignorance that she gave them the oils at all, musing only that some of the denizens of the Birdcage have particularly enthralling singing voices. Tyralandi wouldn't mind seeing the harpies of the Birdcage dealt a blow that would allow her to step in and

Tyralandi

help repair in return for further debt to Porphyry House.

If the PCs secure Tyralandi's aid, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 17 creature in combat.

The Rusty Shunt: If the PCs learn about the Protectorate, a DC 40 Gather Information check is enough to send them to the Rusty Shunt to contact Lars Landicaster about the Protectorate. Lars denies knowing anything about the group, but if the PCs can make a DC 30 Diplomacy check to set him at ease, he mysteriously and quietly invites the PCs to follow him downstairs into the building's basement. After the Seventh Coil slaughtered half their number at Red Foam Whaling and captured Harliss, the remaining members of the Protectorate went into hiding here; their numbers are few, and they can't help the PCs much aside from giving them a safe place to hide and rest. If you're using the Jade Ravens subplot, a new member is among the Protectorate here—**Tolin Kientai** (LN male human ranger 3/fighter 6) hides here with the others, wracked with guilt about the unknown fates of his companions.

PART THREE: RED FOAM WHALING

Assuming the PCs received Harliss Javel's *dream* message, Red Foam Whaling is likely to be one of their first stops in Scuttlecove. It's a simple matter of a DC 10 Gather Information check to determine the location's address ("The run-down building at the far west end of the boardwalk."), although most of the locals are quick to warn them that the place is haunted. If the PCs aren't looking to meet Harliss, they could be directed to Red Foam Whaling as the result of a DC 35 Gather Information check made to find out if there are any "rebels" or non-evil folk operating in the city. In this case, the informant knows that Red Foam's a Protectorate safehouse, but not that it's recently been compromised by the Leech and his assassins.

During Scuttlecove's formative years, an enterprising (but foolish) band of pirates noted that their competitors were sacking merchant ships but not whaling ships. Knowing that whale oil and ambergris are "big business," these pirates took the name of the Red Foam Boys. They converted these buildings into a whaling factory, then set out to murder the crews of whaling vessels, steal their catches, then return to Scuttlecove with the stolen whales to process them and sell the harvest. What the Red Foam Boys didn't account for was the fact that it's much harder to process whales than to steal gold. The pirate band lasted for only three forays before internal strife tore them apart. Today, all that remains of their foolish plan is this slowly rotting whaling factory at the city's edge. The building has served as the home for numerous creatures and organizations over the years, most recently as a safe house for members of the Protectorate who used magic and trickery to give the house a reputation for being haunted. They used the building as a place to smuggle people into (and out of) the city.

Only a few days before the PCs arrive in Scuttlecove, Seventh Coil spies tracked Harliss Javel to this building. In a brutal raid, they murdered all ten Protectorate members who were staying here and captured Harliss. A dangerous member of the Seventh Coil known as the Leech has claimed the building as his own, and thanks to the information provided him by the Sisters of Lamentation at the Birdcage, he knows that Harliss called for help with Tyralandi's *dream* spell. He expects the help to arrive any day, and has turned the building into a devious ambush.

Red Foam Whaling is an unassuming structure cobbled together from two buildings connected by a rickety extension. The piers are partially enclosed by sagging wooden walls and protected from the elements by a long sloping roof, although one chamber (area **A8**) no longer has a ceiling. Unless the PCs take care to hide their approach, they are spotted by the yuan-ti assassins hidden atop the building well before they reach the structure.

Although Red Foam Whaling consists of several areas, the entire building is effectively one encounter with the Leech and his yuan-ti minions, since even if they aren't ready to ambush the PCs, the monsters respond quickly to any attack. The sidebar on page 52 gives a brief description of most of the rooms in the building. The yuan-ti don't attack until the time is right, as detailed below.

The Ambush (EL 17)

Massive iron hooks attached to ropes as thick as arms hang from beams above, which in turn are attached to huge rust-covered pulleys that once enabled workers to maneuver whales into one of the narrow bays between the rickety-looking walkways. Rotting tools—rusting iron-spiked boots, wicked curved knives on long poles, and heavy saws lean against walls to the north and east, while to the west and south there are no walls at all blocking the depressing view of the city's harbor.

Although the butchery has been exposed to the elements for years, a DC 15 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check reveals that the piers have been recently repaired and serviced in a cunning way that makes them stable without looking safe.

Some of the piers were never used by the Protectorate, including the one south of area **A8** and the upraised walkway. These piers are unstable, and if a Medium or larger creature walks on them, the pier collapses. A DC 20 Reflex save allows the creature to leap to safety, with failure indicating a fall into the sloshing 10-foot-deep water below.

Creatures: The Leech and three yuan-ti assassins have prepared an ambush in this area. The Leech himself spends his time in area **A3**, relaxing and waiting for the assassins to raise the alarm when they see the PCs approach. The assassins fear the Leech enough that they've been watching in shifts for several days, using *potions of lesser restoration* to fight back fatigue. Each of them has 1 potion left when the PCs arrive.

The yuan-ti assassins spend their time in the form of Tiny vipers on the building roofs, one above area **A6**, one above area **A1**, and one above area **A3**. From these positions they can keep an eye on creatures approaching from all directions. They've been given basic descriptions of the PCs, but raise the alarm if they notice anyone approaching the building with the apparent intent of entering. The snake above **A3**

Red Foam Whaling

A1. Entrance: Both sets of double doors in this room are stuck (Strength DC 20). The room itself is empty, save for a rotting desk and a few broken chairs.

A2. Meeting Room: A round table surrounded by four chairs sits in this room; the Protectorate once used this area to meet and plan smugglings.

A3. The Leech's Lair: Once the bunkhouse for nearly a dozen members of the Protectorate, the Leech has made this place his home, as detailed in "The Leech's Lair."

A4. Storage: This room is used to store lanterns, costumes, bullhorns, rolls of thin wire, and other supplies the Protectorate used to maintain the illusion that the building was haunted. A DC 25 Bluff check made while investigating the supplies here is enough for a character to realize what they were likely used for.

A5–A6. Barracks: These chambers were used by Protectorate members to rest. Each room contains six hammocks, one slung above the other in groups of three.

A7. The Butchery: This large area is detailed in "The Ambush."

A8. Unstable Room: Once used as an observation room for the butchery, this roofless chamber is now quite unstable. If anything more than one Medium creature enters this room, the floor collapses (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 66).

slithers through a crack in the roof to warn the Leech, then all three move into area **A7** to take up positions. One lurks under the upraised walkway on the central pier, one in the rafters up above the door just south of area **A6**, and one in the rafters just south of the southern door to area **A3**. The Leech takes up a hidden position under the walkway and stairs just to the southwest of area **A8** and summons one of his favorite playthings, a succubus named Alersia, to take up position at the area marked **A7** on the map. Alersia assumes Harliss' form and pretends to be unconscious, waiting for the PCs to enter the area and rush to her side.

The name "abomination" is well suited to the grotesque yuan-ti known to his kin as the Leech. His flesh is a sickened yellow-green hue, with a face pulled back in a ghastly rictus grin, as if horrifically scarred by acid. The Leech is an uncontrolled menace even within the Seventh Coil; he views himself as the chosen of Demogorgon.

THE LEECH **CR 16**

Male yuan-ti abomination blackguard 3/thrall of Demogorgon 6

CE Large monstrous humanoid

Monster Manual 264, *Book of Vile Darkness* 67

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +7, Spot +25

Aura despair (–2 on enemy's saves, 10 ft.)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Yuan-ti

AC 33, touch 13, flat-footed 31

hp 192 (18 HD)

SR 18

Fort +22, **Ref** +16, **Will** +19

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee mwk scimitar +26/+21/16/+11 (1d8+8/18–20) and bite +20 (2d6+4 plus poison, DC 20)

Ranged *+3 composite longbow* +24/+19/+14/+9 (2d6+12/×3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +30

Atk Options Cleave, Improved Sunder, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, constrict 1d6+8, improved grab (bite), smite good 1/day (+5 on attack roll, +3 damage)

Special Actions hypnosis, rebuke undead (+7, 2d6+6), rotting touch, *summon demon*, touch of fear

Combat Gear *potion of fly*

Blackguard Spells Prepared (CL 3rd)
2nd—*eagle's splendor*
1st—*corrupt weapon*, *cure light wounds* (2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
At will—*alternate form* (CL 19th), *animal trance* (DC 17), *aversion* (DC 23, CL 16th), *chameleon power*, *detect good* (CL 3rd), *detect poison* (CL 6), *entangle* (DC 16), *produce acid*
3/day—*deeper darkness*, *neutralize poison* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 18)
1/day—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20, into snake form only), *fear* (DC 19)

Abilities Str 27, Dex 15, Con 22, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 20

SQ dark blessing, poison use, reaching touch, scaly flesh +2

Feats Abyss-Bound Soul (Demogorgon), Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Evil Brand, Improved Sunder, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Thrall to Demon (Demogorgon), Willing Deformity

Skills Concentrate +27, Hide +20 (+30 when using *chameleon power*), Intimidate +25 (+27 against evil), Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (local) +22, Knowledge (religion) +25, Move Silently +17, Swim +16, Spot +25

Possessions combat gear, *+3 breastplate*, *+3 composite longbow* (+8 Str) with 20 cold iron arrows and 20 arrows, masterwork scimitar, *greater bracers of archery*, *ring of protection +2*, *belt of giant strength +4*

Dual Actions (Su) Twice per day, the Leech can take two full rounds' worth of actions in the same round.

Hypnosis (Su) Once per day, the Leech can produce an effect identical to that of the *hypnotism* spell, except it functions as a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet. A DC 16 Will save negates this effect; the save DC is Charisma-based.

Reaching Touch (Su) Three times a day, as a free action, the Leech can cause his arms to stretch unnaturally, increasing his reach by 5 feet for 1 round.

Rotting Touch (Su) Three times per day, the Leech can deal 1d6 points of Constitution damage as a touch attack.

Scaly Flesh (Ex) The Leech's natural armor bonus gains a +2 bonus.

***Summon Demon* (Sp)** The Leech can summon a demon of 5 HD or less once a day, as if using a *summon monster* spell (CL 15th). He can also summon any single tanar'ri with a CR of 8 or lower once a day; a demon summoned in this manner remains at his side for up to 1 hour and follows his commands.

Touch of Fear (Su) Three times per day, the Leech can cause a creature he strikes with a touch attack to become frightened for 1d4 rounds. A DC 16 Will save means the creature touched is merely shaken for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Feats Abyss-Bound Soul grants the Leech a +2 bonus on saves made against spells with the good descriptor, and allows him to summon a CR 8 demon as detailed above. Evil Brand grants him a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against evil creatures. Thrall to Demon allows him to gain a +1 luck bonus on any one attack roll, saving htrow, ability check, skill check, or level check once per day. Willing Deformity grants him a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks.

Seventh Coil Assassins (3): hp 107 each; see page 49.

Alersia, succubus: hp 33; *Monster Manual* 47.

Tactics: The ambush setup is unlikely to trick adventurers for long, but the yuan-ti merely want to delay the PCs for a few rounds, long enough for them to study the PCs and start combat with death attacks. Alersia, as Harliss, feigns unconsciousness with her Bluff check, and as the PCs approach moans as if in great pain. On the third round, she opens her eyes and embraces the nearest PC, using her energy drain as she kisses that PC in feigned relief. The yuan-ti use this moment to attempt death attacks on any other PCs in range. The Leech takes advantage of these three rounds to cast *corrupt weapon* on his scimitar, followed by *eagle's splendor*.

When combat begins, the yuan-ti assassins move in to engage the PCs in melee while the Leech fires at any obvious clerics or paladins with his bow. Alersia continues using her energy drain as long as she can, but if attacked she teleports to the Leech's side to continue the fight using her spell-like abilities.

As long as the Leech lives, the assassins do not retreat—the Leech has no intention of surrendering his new lair, and continues to attack until reduced to 40 hit points or less. At this point, he uses *deeper darkness* to cover his retreat, assuming the form of a Tiny viper the next round as he tries to retreat to area **A3** to recover and defend his lair. The Leech fights to the death if confronted there.

Once the Leech is slain, the assassins attempt to flee as well, scattering separately into the city. Alersia teleports away as well at this time, not wishing to continue a battle against obviously superior foes.

The Leech's Lair

Originally used as a barracks for the Red Foam Boys and later by the Protectorate, this large room is now the Leech's lair. The horrific yuan-ti has transformed the chamber into a testimony to his bizarre cruelty and self-obsession. He has collected its own shed skins over the past several decades and uses them to decorate the walls of this chamber like tapestries. The skins waft in the breeze and are layered like curtains so that every 5 feet there is a fresh wall of skins—either the Leech's own, or those removed from his victims.

The Leech has created a horrific work of "art" in the southwest corner of the room using parts of animals and people stitched together by thick black yarn to create a foully distorted, double-headed form of great size with twin tentacles and a double-ended tail. Anyone viewing the horrible creation and making a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the creation as a crude likeness of Demogorgon.

Treasure: Among the stitched flesh and body parts of the Leech's statue of Demogorgon are two gold bracelets with stylized whales worth 150 gp each and a single large jet stone worth 200 gp. The Leech was also an admirer of scrimshaw art, and several works lean against the walls here. Of the ten, nine are mundane and worth 10 gp each. The tenth, though, is carved on an immense tooth and depicts the rarest of events—a Hateful Compulsion, the breeding ritual of krakens. This scrimshaw is both beautiful and monstrous, and is worth 700 gp.

Zan Oldavin

The Leech has placed **Zan Oldavin** (N male half-elf rogue 9) in the Butchery, at approximately the location of "A7" on the map, hoping the PCs flock to his side and inadvertantly place themselves in at the perfect spot for an ambush.

Zan is in a terrible state, his body festering with filth fever and many infected wounds. Effectively stable at –6 hp, he is willing and able to assist the heroes if cured. He knows that Kaskus Kiel was captured as well, and that the Minting House is a yuan-ti safe house, but isn't sure what's happened to Liamae or Tolin.

Liamae Teslikiria

When the Jade Ravens reached Scuttlecove, **Liamae Teslikaria** (CG female human sorcerer 4/favored soul 4/mystic theurge 1) attempted to infiltrate the Birdcage to find out what they knew about Lavinia and Vanthus. Charmed several times by the harpies and currently under a *lesser geas* to never attempt escape, her spirit is broken. If the spells affecting her can be removed, she gladly joins the PCs in their efforts as long as those efforts include the slaughter of every harpy in the building.

The Leech's nest is in the northeast corner of the room, a foul-smelling mound of rags, torn skins, poorly-preserved animal pelts, and stained sheets. A DC 20 Search of the nest reveals a stained burlap sack near the north wall—this sack contains Harliss Javell's gear, stolen from her by the Leech. The Leech has not yet had time to have the magic items identified or pawn the jewelry. A full list of this gear appears in Harliss' stat block on page 58.

Characters who met Harliss back in Kraken's Cove can recognize the distinctive earrings and necklace with a DC 20 Wisdom check. Also among her gear is a belt pouch containing miscellaneous supplies (a comb, some stale bread, a flask of grog, etc.) and a folded note on which is written a brief message (reproduced as Handout 1). This note was Harliss' letter of introduction to Tyralandi from her (now dead) Protectorate contact. A DC 25 Knowledge (local) check reveals who Tyralandi is and where she can be found. Alternately, a DC 12 Gather Information check can do the same. A DC 30 Knowledge (local) or Gather Information check reveals that Zimon Alenveer was recently executed by the monks of Dire Hunger at the paid request of the Crimson Fleet. Zimon's body is gone, but if the PCs exceed the DC by 10 or more, they also discover that he was a member of the Protectorate and once led that group's operations at Red Foam Whaling.

Esteemed Tyralandi,

The bearer of this note is a friend and associate of mine. If you could aid her, I would be once again in your debt. Please extend to her every courtesy.

Zimon Alenveer

Handout 1

PART FOUR: THE BIRDCAGE

Located in the heart of the city, this small gray tower is decorated with luridly colored flags and numerous bas-relief carvings of stylized harpies armed with whips and daggers. The Birdcage, also known as the Crooked Spire, is a stone townhouse topped by a spire built of cheap timber. It has developed a singular twist over the years but has so far avoided total collapse. Inside the building, the walls and doors are garishly painted with alarmingly instructional erotic imagery, whilst lanterns hang from hooks in the ceiling every 10 feet. Braziers of sandalwood burn all day long.

After Tyralandi claimed Porphyry House as her own, she lifted the previous owner's ban on competing brothels—somewhat. All new brothels had to be licensed by Porphyry House, and the licensing fees were steep. A group of harpies known as the Sisters of Lamentation had the money, though, and they founded this relatively new building as one of Scuttlecove's "other" bordellos. They quickly learned that they couldn't compete with Porphyry House, and today their services have changed to a sort of "information retrieval" rather than pleasure. For the right price (minimum 100 gp per day), the Sisters of Lamentation claim that they can extract any secret, no matter how deeply hidden or guarded, from any living creature. If they can't extract it from the living, they can guarantee answers from the dead. Not quite torturers for hire, the harpies of the Birdcage have done brisk business extracting information from subjects other torturers have been unable to break. For if less invasive methods fail, the shaved harpies of the Birdcage can always animate the dead bodies of their clients and order them to divulge what their rotting brains remember.

The Birdcage is run by a cabal of several harpies, all of whom shave their bodies bald and festoon their flesh with tattoos and horrific piercings (often little more than nails driven into hands, feet, and scalps) to increase their fearsome appearance. At any one time, three of these harpies are on-site, with the other half-dozen scouring the city for information and customers. The harpies are assisted by six terrified and charmed slaves, all of whom are forced to wear humiliating and embarrassing outfits made of leather and peacock feathers.

The Birdcage's most recent commission is Harliss Javell, left here by the Seventh Coil. The harpies worked on her for a few days and managed to extract a few tantalizing bits of information, including the fact that she's joined the Protectorate and recently contacted "allies" to aid her in some plan she has involving the Crimson Fleet. Descriptions of these allies (the PCs) were sent on to the Leech, but so far the harpies haven't managed to get much more from the

strong-willed woman. The Seventh Coil is particularly keen to find out more details on her plans for the Crimson Fleet, hoping to use the information to leverage a stronger position with their pirate allies. A miscommunication with funds (the yuan-ti courier was ambushed and murdered by several desperate drug dealers before he could deliver the latest payment) resulted in the harpies not being paid on time, and they've held off further interrogations until the debt is settled. For now, Harliss remains in bad shape in the central cage within the Crooked Spire.

The most likely way the PCs learn that Harliss is being kept here is by asking Tyralandi about the note they found in the Leech's lair. Alternately, spells like *discern location* and *locate creature* can lead the PCs to this building. Even *scrying* might work, since *scrying* on Harliss reveals her to be unconscious in a large, dangling birdcage. A DC 30 Gather Information or Knowledge (local) check suggests that, logically speaking, the Birdcage is the most likely place for her location.

B1. Recieving

The walls of this garishly painted chamber depict scenes that would make even the most brazen streetwalker blush. A fine oak cabinet stands to the left of the entrance door, and a low table with a bottle of port and several crystal glasses stands next to a few padded chairs near a door to the south.

The entrance to the Birdcage remains open at all hours of the day or night, but the southern door is quite sturdy and kept locked (Open Lock DC 40) at all times. This room is staffed by a single charmed human slave (NE warrior 1) who takes the names of anyone who wishes to set up an appointment. This human slave doesn't have a key to the door; he merely records names and makes appointments in a large ledger on the desk, meekly inviting visitors to have a sip of wine before they leave. If the PCs schedule an appointment, they can return the next day only to be told that the sisters have denied the appointment (unless they made the appointment in disguise). The slave makes no attempt to stop anyone who tries to bash down the southern door or pick its lock.

Treasure: The bottle of port is an import from the city of Alhaster, and bears a label depicting a drunken nymph. Currently unopened, the bottle is worth 50 gp; each of the four crystal glasses are worth 20 gp.

B2. The Spectacle and Tantalizing Audibility (EL 16)

This room is a vast space, a garishly painted chamber of great height that seems to consist of the entire central mass of the building. The walls are decorated to a height of thirty feet with paintings of an erotic nature that leave nothing to the imagination. The interior of the spire above is a tangled network of beams and supports. Four huge oak beams extend upward into the cathedral-like space, rising around a huge birdcage made of metal and crystal that dangles from the rafters by several iron chains and creaking ropes. The chamber's floor is thickly carpeted, and a balcony runs around the edge of the room at a height of fifteen feet, granting access to several narrow doorways.

A handful of enthralled slaves mill about this room as they move back and forth from the chambers to the east and west or go about cleaning the carpet and walls. Listless and quiet, these slaves scurry for cover if combat breaks out in the room.

The network of beams far above serve the harpies as perches and roosts to sleep upon. Clambering around on them is possible with a DC 10 Climb check or a DC 12 Balance check.

Creatures: When the PCs enter this chamber, 1d3 Sisters of Lamentation are present, either perched on one of the rafters above or idly tormenting Harliss (who's imprisoned in area **B7**). The sisters are named Vivisectia, Chasten, and Scourge. Sisters not present are in one of the side rooms attending to other prisoners (areas **B6**). The harpies have no interest in interacting with the PCs, whom

they likely recognize as Harliss' allies. If, on the other hand, the PCs are disguised as customers, the harpies flap down to interview them and determine what they need. Payment for interrogations is required up front, especially after the Seventh Coil failed to provide payment for their latest project. The harpies use *detect thoughts* as part of their interview process, and are adept at seeing through bluffs, but if the PCs pull off their deception they can use the opportunity to scout out the room or spring a surprise attack.

If combat breaks out in here, a disturbing sound not unlike a wailing baby or wounded cat echoes down from the cage above—this caterwauling is from the Young Master, the guardian of the cage (area **B7**).

Vivisectia, Chasten, and Scourge; Sisters of Lamentation (3) **CR 13**

Female harpy bard 7/diresinger 5

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Monster Manual 151, *Libris Mortis* 43

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 16; Dodge, Mobility

hp 108 (19 HD)

Fort +7, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Melee *dagger of venom* +16/+11/+6 (1d4+1/19–20) and 2 claws +10 (1d3)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +15

Atk Options Flyby Attack

Special Actions bardic music/dirgesong 12/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, song of awakening, song of bolstering, song of grief, song of horror, song of sorrow, *suggestion*), captivating song (DC 21)

Spells Known (CL 7th)

3rd (1/day)—*lesser geas* (DC 19), *major image* (DC 19)

2nd (4/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 18), *enthrall* (DC 18), *invisibility*, *suggestion* (DC 18)

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 17), *cure light wounds*, *grease* (DC 17), *silent image* (DC 17)

0 (3/day)—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 22

SQ bardic knowledge +7

Feats Ability Focus (captivating song), Dodge, Flyby Attack, Mobility, Persuasive, Requiem, Willing Deformity

Skills Bluff +20, Concentration +12, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (religion) +7, Perform (oratory) +23, Sense Motive +14

Possessions *dagger of venom*, *ring of protection +3*, *ring of force shield*, keys for all locks in the Birdcage

Dirgesong (Su) Dirgesong follows the same rules as bardic music. The five effects a Sister of Lamentation can create with dirgesong follow.

Song of Awakening: The sister can animate a corpse of a creature within 30 feet if she can make a Perform check (DC 10 + target creature's HD). The slain creature can have no more Hit Dice than the harpy's effective character level (15 HD). The corpse must have been dead for no more than 1 hour. The awakened creature's type becomes undead, and it retains any subtypes, class features, and supernatural or spell-like abilities; it loses all extraordinary abilities it possessed in life. The undead is loyal to the harpy and obeys any commands given it (or attacks her foes if no commands are given). The creature remains animated as long as the harpy continues to perform. A harpy can have no more than one awakened corpse at a time.

Song of Bolstering: All undead within 30 feet gain a +5 bonus to their turn resistance. This lasts for as long as the harpy performs and for 10 rounds thereafter.

Song of Grief: A single creature within 60 feet that can hear the harpy must make a DC 27 Will save or become confused as long as the harpy performs and for 5 rounds thereafter. This is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability.

Song of Horror: Any enemy within 60 feet of the harpy who can hear her must make a DC 27 Will save or take 1d6 Strength damage and 1d6 Dexterity damage. A creature affected by this song (or a creature that saves against this effect) cannot be affected by the same dirgesinger's song of horror for 24 hours.

Song of Sorrow: All enemies who can hear the dirgesinger perform take a –2 penalty on Will saving throws and a –2 penalty on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls. A DC 27 Will save negates the effect and makes the character immune to that dirgesinger's song of sorrow for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting ability.

Feats Willing Deformity grants a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks. Requiem allows mind-affecting bardic music abilities to influence the undead, although they have half their normal duration on undead creatures.

Tactics: If the PCs barge into this chamber, any harpies in the room immediately start to shriek and curse, attracting harpies in nearby rooms in 1d3 rounds. The harpies demand the PCs leave immediately; if the party doesn't comply, the harpies attack at once.

In a fight, one harpy lands on the birdcage (area **B7**) and uses her captivating song while the others work to prevent unaffected PCs from disrupting her. On the first round of combat, one harpy activates a song of grief while another uses a song of horror. On the second round, the first harpy uses a song of horror while the second one employs a song of sorrow. The harpies use flight to stay out of melee at this point, and on round three the harpies focus their spells and make flyby attacks on anyone who's getting close to the cage. If they face a bard or a character with a *silence* effect, all three focus their attention on that character and attempt to bring them down as soon as possible. If the harpies manage to kill any PCs, one immediately uses a song of awakening to recruit a new ally into the fight. The Sisters of Lamentation fight to the death.

Treasure: These three harpies each wear an item of jewelry—Vivisectia wears an emerald necklace with silver butterflies worth 900 gp, Chasten a pearl necklace with a central pearl of great size worth 500 gp, and Scourge a gold broach designed like a gliding dove with small diamonds for eyes worth 800 gp.

B3–B4. The Kept Beyond Gratitude

The harpies only allow their slaves to sleep a few hours a day, and never more than four at a time—the slaves use the bunks here when they're granted nap time. Papers on the table in area **B3** are agreements with hundreds of prominent locals. A DC 20 Search of the stack turns up a past-due bill for the Seventh Coil for interrogations of "a feisty and foul-mouthed wench."

Treasure: A locked chest (Open Lock DC 30) under the table in area **B3** contains ten bottles of Tipsy Nymph port; each bottle is worth 50 gp.

B5. Waiting Parlors

Not all of the projects that come to the Birdcage are multi-day ones like Harliss; most of them take only a few hours. Customers are welcome to wait in either of these parlors while the sisters work; each of these chambers features a few chairs and a low table with glasses for wine.

Treasure: The two glasses on each table are worth 20 gp each.

B6. Interrogation Rooms

While the exact furnishings of each of these rooms varies, they all serve the same purpose—information extraction. Some rooms look like classic torture chambers, complete with racks, iron maidens, or collections of brands and whips. Two look more like the bedchambers of nobility, where the horrific harpies use other, more sinister methods to torture prisoners.

B7. The Cage of Ecstatic and Infinitely Joyful Lamentation (EL 8)

This hanging birdcage is huge, some thirty feet high and fifteen in girth. The iron bars are covered with dozens of ragged barbs, and manacles hang from several places. Whips, hooked chains, knives, leather cords, and other devices for torture sit on metal shelves here and there. The cage floor is a filthy tangle of reeking rags and bones. Near the top of the cage sits a smaller cage, only five feet across and just as tall. In this smaller cage is a pile of rags arranged in what looks to be a nest.

The door to this cage can be reached by a 3-foot-wide walkway that attaches to a balcony 30 feet above the floor below. The door itself is kept locked (Open Lock DC 40). This cage is where the Sisters of Lamentation keep their highest profile "guests," which gives them the satisfaction of performing their craft before an audience in the chamber below.

If the sounds of combat haven't riled up the occupant of the smaller cage above, a DC 20 Listen check is enough to hear the Young Master's phlegmatic gurgles as he giggles at his latest creations.

Creatures: The cage's current occupant is a near-death Harliss Javell. Stable at –8 hit points, the harpies take care to check on her hourly to make sure she doesn't die.

The smaller cage near the top is the home of a freakish little abomination the harpies keep as a pet and a guardian, a pitiful creature they call the Little Goule. The horrible undead creature resembles a human child with slug-white skin, tiny claws, black, empty eyes, and a mouth filled with needle-sharp teeth. Vivisectia found the wretched thing washed up on the eastern shores of Sekorvia many years ago, and despite months of research she's been unable to determine more about its source other than that it's fantastically old and likely originated in the Abyss.

The Little Goule is a vile thing—a distended mass of sweaty flesh with a lolling head fixed with a permanent leering grin. The Young Master, as the harpies sometimes refer to him,

constantly yowls, screeches, and acts up, desperate for the attention of the harpies, their servants, or anyone in the vicinity. The creature enjoys writing lurid stories that make little sense to anything but itself. The harpies keep it well-supplied with sticks of charcoal and pieces of parchment or paper, and dozens of fragmentary stories written in Abyssal lie scattered around the cage floor. Originally kept as a guardian for the cage (its small size hides a terrific and dangerous ferocity), the harpies have come to adore the thing and regard it as the most precious, delicate, and talented wonder in their lives. Little Goule adores all this attention, and plays on it constantly.

The Little Goule remains in its cage as long as no one tries to enter the larger cage below. As soon as any one other than one of the harpies attempts to enter the cage or interact with its prisoner, the undead creature shrieks in rage, tears open the door to its cage, and flops down to attack the intruders.

THE LITTLE GOULE **CR 8**

Advanced evolved slaymate
CE Small undead
Libris Mortis 99, 122
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14
Aura pale aura (10 ft.)
Languages Abyssal

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 20
hp 60 (8 HD); fast healing 3
Immune undead traits
Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Spd 20 ft.
Melee bite +11 (1d3+9 plus pale wasting)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +1
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
1/day—*confusion* (DC 22), *greater invisibility*, *haste*

Abilities Str 22, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 26
Feats Alertness, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Lightning Reflexes
Skills Hide +16, Listen +14, Move Silently +12, Spot +14

Pale Aura (Su) Any creature within 10 feet of a slaymate that uses a metamagic feat on a necromancy spell can prepare or use the spell as if it took up one slot lower than what the metamagic necromancy spell would normally require.
Pale Wasting (Su) Supernatural disease—bite; Fortitude DC 22; incubation period 1 day; damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Str.

Development: Harliss wants nothing more than to escape the Birdcage and reach somewhere safe. If revived, she's grateful for the PCs' intervention, but until she puts some distance between herself and this horrific building, she remains silent. Even after she reaches safety, she never speaks of the torments the harpies put her through.

When she finally feels safe and ready to talk, she can be a remarkable source of information about Scuttlecove. Further, she's come quite close to determining where the Crimson Fleet's hidden base is located; before she was captured by the Seventh Coil, she discovered that the yuan-ti operate a safe house at a place called the Minting House. She's certain that they've met with the Crimson Fleet there and forged an alliance. If anywhere in Scuttlecove holds the secret of the Crimson Fleet base's location, it's the Minting House. More to the point, if the PCs are itching for vengeance against the yuan-ti (as Harliss certainly is), a trip to the Minting House might scratch that itch.

The following statistics present Harliss Javell in her fully healed state and equipped with her gear; if the PCs don't heal her or return her gear (which is hidden in area **A3**), adjust her stats as appropriate. Harliss' role in the rest of this adventure is left to you to determine. She certainly still seethes with a need to avenge her crew, and now wants revenge against the Seventh Coil as well. If the PCs seem to be struggling with the adventure, or if you simply want to interject a colorful NPC into the mix, you can have her accompany them on their further adventures in Scuttlecove. Harliss is a bold beauty with raven-black hair and deeply tanned skin, although when the PCs find her, she's in bad need of a bath. Her voice has a hard, crisp edge to it, and her skill at profanity is legendary.

CAPTAIN HARLISS JAVELL **CR 15**

Female human swashbuckler 3/rogue 3/scarlet corsair 9
CN Medium humanoid
Stormwrack 65
Init +4; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Aquan, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18
hp 87 (15 HD)
Fort +10, **Ref** +17, **Will** +8; evasion

Spd 40 ft.
Melee +2 *anarchic rapier* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+2/15–20) or
+2 *anarchic rapier* +18/+13/+8 (1d6+2/15–20) and
mwk dagger +17 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +19 (1d4/19–20)
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +14
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Flick of the Wrist, Improved Feint, corsair's feint, frightening lunge, sneak attack +4d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ sailor's step, trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Expertise, Flick of the Wrist, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Feint, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +19, Bluff +16, Climb +6, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +21, Jump +19, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (sailor) +15, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +12, Swim +14, Tumble +17, Use Rope +13
Possessions +3 *leather armor*, +2 *anarchic rapier*, 4 masterwork daggers, *ring of protection +2*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *rope of climbing*, *boots of striding and springing*, a pair of marilith-shaped earrings worth 1,200 gp for the pair, a jade necklace with a shark's tooth at its center worth 600 gp

Corsair's Feint (Ex) Harliss may make a feint as a free action once every 1d4 rounds.
Flick of the Wrist (Ex) If Harliss draws a light weapon and makes a melee attack with it in the same round, she catches her opponent flat-footed (for the purpose of this attack only). She may use this feat only once per round and once per opponent during any single combat encounter. This feat is from *Complete Warrior*.

Frightening Lunge (Ex) Harliss can sacrifice 2d6 points of damage from a successful sneak attack to render a foe shaken for 1 round.

Grace (Ex) Harliss gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex saves as long as she does not wear medium or heavy armor and is not carrying a medium or heavy load.

Insightful Strike (Ex) Harliss applies her Intelligence bonus to damage rolls with any light weapon, as well as any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse. Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to this additional damage. Harliss loses this ability if she wears medium or heavy armor or carries a medium or heavy load.

Sailor's Step (Ex) When aboard a ship and wearing nothing more than light armor, Harliss gains a +4 dodge bonus to her Armor Class.

Scourge of the Seas (Ex) When Harliss uses Intimidate to demoralize foes, the attempt affects all enemies within 30 feet who can see and hear her, and the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to her Charisma modifier. This is a mind-affecting ability, and multiple uses of the ability don't stack.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs rescue Harliss, award them experience as if they'd defeated a CR 16 creature.

PART FIVE: THE MINTING HOUSE

The Seventh Coil maintains several hideouts in Scuttlecove; the Minting House is but one example. The hideout is presented here in detail as an example Seventh Coil base; you can use the location in many ways. If the PCs are captured by the Seventh Coil, they might end up in the cells below this building. If they're struggling to uncover the location of the Crimson Fleet stronghold, you can guide them here (perhaps at Harliss' suggestion) to give them an opportunity to learn more. And if your players are simply looking for a fight (or if they need a bit more XP before they try to take on the Wreck in Part Six), the encounters here should do nicely.

The Minting House is a narrow brick building sandwiched between a fortified warehouse and a blackened alchemy shop. The place has three stories under a steeply gabled roof, anda towering chimney of great size thrusts upward from its peak. Once used by a gang of thieves to operate a counterfeiting operation, the yuan-ti here have idly taken steps to revitalize the building's old purpose to augment their income from the slave market.

The chambers within the Minting House are detailed only briefly in the sidebar. Five yuan-ti slavers and eight charmed Scuttlecove thug "pets" are inside the Minting House when the PCs visit; as soon as combat begins with one of them, they all mobilize to fight the PCs. As a result, combat in the Minting House can quickly develop into a multi-floor melee.

If you're using this encounter as a way to give the PCs a chance to discover the Crimson Fleet's headquarters, the location can be learned from any yuan-ti slaver made helpful (likely through the result of magic); alternately, one of them could be carrying a map of Sekorvia that shows the approximate location of the site.

Seventh Coil Slavers (5) **CR 11**

Male yuan-ti pureblood sorcerer 10
CE Medium monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 263

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 18
hp 69 (83 with *false life*, 14 HD)
SR 24
Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +12

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *shock dagger* +9/+4 (1d4 plus 1d6 electrical)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +8
Combat Gear scroll of *Mordenkainen's private sanctum* (2), scroll of *sending*, scroll of *teleport*
Spells Known (CL 10th, +12 ranged touch)
5th (4/day)—*dominate person* (DC 21)
4th (6/day)—*charm monster* (DC 20), *enervation*
3rd (7/day)—*fly*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19)
2nd (7/day)—*bull's strength*, *false life* (already cast), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*
1st (7/day)—*animate rope*, *charm person* (DC 17), *identify*, *mage armor* (already cast), *shield*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)
At will—*alternate form*, *detect poison*
1/day—*animal trance* (DC 18), *cause fear* (DC 17), *darkness*, *entangle* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 22
SQ summon familiar (Tiny viper)
Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Construct, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Bluff +17, Concentration +19, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +3, Spellcraft +13, Spot +10
Possessions combat gear, +1 *shock dagger*, *cloak of Charisma* +4, *ring of protection* +3

Scuttlecove Thugs (8): hp 70 each; see page 78.

PART SIX: AGAINST THE CRIMSON FLEET

The headquarters of the Crimson Fleet is hidden in a secret cove about 11 miles northwest of Scuttlecove. The Crimson Fleet's hidden stronghold is a unique and tangled collection of ships, piers, buildings, and a towering structure perched in the branches of several massive, twisted trees built with the aid of engineering marvels and magic. This is the lair of the Crimson Fleet's leaders, and is known as The Wreck.

The Crimson Fleet was a notorious scourge even before it drew Demogorgon's eye. The pirates of the fleet, based in the city of Scuttlecove, had long plied the tropics, and sight of their blood-red sails was enough to send any merchant or explorer into a panic. Their reach was vast, extending from the ends of the world up into the civilized lands of the north. They had bases in dozens of cities, and contacts in dozens more. They already paid lip-service to the Prince of Demons, although to this point merely used his image and name as a tool to strike fear into the hearts of their enemies. And perhaps more to the point, they were based in close proximity to the Isle of Dread.

This combination of facts made the Crimson Fleet the best choice for Demogorgon's agents on the Material Plane—here was a group that not only already had a vast network of resources,

The Minting House

C1. Empty Room: The yuan-ti keep this room empty to help maintain the illusion that the building is abandoned to anyone who peers through the shuttered windows from the street.

C2. Pantry: Food, water, and other supplies are kept here.

C3. Thug Barracks: The eight charmed thugs sleep here on straw pallets when they're not taking care of tasks for the yuan-ti. 1d8 of them are encountered here. The remaining thugs are toiling in area C5.

C4. Serpent Barracks: The slavers use this room as their own barracks and as a place to plan their slave-gathering raids. 1d4 of the yuan-ti slavers are encountered here; the remainder are in area C8.

C5. Minting Room: The remaining thugs toil in this room, melting down coins and recasting them in slightly smaller molds. Worked properly, this scam can let an industrious group increase their wealth by 1/3; these thugs haven't quite mastered the art yet and are wasting as many coins as they counterfeit. A search of this room reveals 240 gp and 690 counterfeit gp.

C6. The Furnace: A churning furnace in this room is used to melt down coins; smoke from the furnace is vented through the building's large chimney.

C7. Cells: Currently empty, these cells can be used to hold any PC prisoners the yuan-ti catch during the course of the adventure.

C8. Shrine to Demogorgon: A stone statue of Demogorgon dominates this otherwise empty room. Any yuan-ti encountered here are deep in meditation, and suffer a –4 penalty on Spot and Listen checks as a result. The secret door (Search DC 20) leads to a narrow escape tunnel that winds 200 feet to the south and opens into the basement of an abandoned butcher's shop.

but one that was based in relatively close proximity to one of the Prince of Demons's greatest Material Plane strongholds, and perhaps the only place where the *shadow pearls* could be created.

And so Demogorgon sent one of his minions, an undead demon named Gromsfed the Drowned, to the Material Plane to recruit the leader of the Crimson Fleet, a man called Cold Captain Wyther. Taken to the Abyss by Gomsfed, Cold Captian Wyther was brought before Demogorgon. Kneeling before the Prince of Demons, Cold Captain Wyther knew fear for the first and last time in his life. Demogogon issued an ultimatum—serve him on the world of flesh and be rewarded with great power, or suffer the agony of eternal death at the hands of Karizmodus the Carver on blood-stained Harrowrend. For Wyther, the choice was simple.

After his return to the Material Plane, Cold Captain Wyther was a different man. Spiritually, he now venerated Demogorgon with all his black heart. Physically, he was a lemorian, a half-fiend crafted from his mortal body in the fleshforges of Lemoriax. He offered his captains the same deal that had been offered to him. Those who quailed were publicly executed, while those who remained loyal were taken to Lemoriax on Wyther's ship, which had been outfitted with an artifact called a *wakeportal* that allowed a ship to sail from the Material Plane to the Abyss. Once there, these loyal men were transformed into lemorians as well, given the gift of demonic strength and magic so as to better serve their new lord.

The demonic taint that spread through the commanders of the Crimson Fleet not only increased crew loyalty (mostly out of fear), but greatly increased their

notoriety as well. Captain Wyther ordered a change to the fleet's flag, adding a pair of horns to the jolly roger's skull, and today, they have become one of the great terrors of the sea.

Vanthus's recent and unexpected return caught the Crimson Fleet off guard. Intimidated by his monstrous new appearance and deadly new powers, Captain Wyther had no choice but to cede control of the fleet to the death knight when he arrived, demanded several bar-lgrua, and then returned with his captured sister. When Vanthus finally revealed that he intended to sail to Gaping Maw on Wyther's ship, the leader of the Crimson Fleet saw it as a chance to be done with the menace and gladly gave him the wheel. Since Vanthus's recent departure from the Material Plane, Cold Captain Wyther has had his hands full rebuilding his reputation as a fearless and dangerous leader. A fair amount of Crimson Fleet captains have mutinied, and Cold Captain Wyther has sent most of his remaining loyalists out to chase the mutineers down and force them to return to the fleet or die. As a result, the fleet's resources are spread thin. Few pirates remain to protect their base. The time has never been better to strike a blow against the most notorious pirates in the Vohoun Ocean.

Finding the Base

The Crimson Fleet base is well hidden. Few of Scuttlecove's citizens know where it's located, and fewer still care to share this knowledge. And although high-level PCs have plenty of magical resources, so does the Crimson Fleet.

Two magical effects shield the cove from observation. The first of these is a complex set of permanent illusions that effectively duplicates the effects of a single massive *screen* spell. This effect masks the cove, making it appear to be nothing more than a desolate and barren stretch of saltmarsh. A creature that blunders into the area can make a DC 22 Will save to disbelieve the illusion. This effect functions at CL 20th.

The second magical shield is a permanent *Mordenkainen's private sanctum*. This effect functions at CL 20th. If an observer uses *true seeing* to penetrate the *screen* effect, this spell prevents observation of the cove from beyond its borders. Further, it prevents attempts to scry within the area, and all creatures in the area are immune to *detect thoughts*.

When the PCs manage to get a good look at the area, read them the following:

The stronghold of the Crimson Fleet matches perfectly the pirates' vile nature, a sodden mass of boats and piers squatting over a filthy, reeking saltmarsh. What at first looked like a layer of mist over the water is in fact a layer of seething insects, gnats and mosquitoes and flies that choke the air. The wooden piers dip perilously in places, and the boats moored to them are often lashed together. Totems and effigies hang everywhere—carved whalebones depicting evil, twisting things that surely the gods would not let draw breath, moldy corn dolls representing deformed men, and bundles of feathers and poorly preserved animal carcasses and bones. Gibbets hang from masts by thick hairy ropes, and these hold emaciated figures that move fitfully now and then. Several wooden shacks perch on thick stilts around the maze of piers and ships, and a two-story stone tower rises at the center on a rocky islet, but the most impressive sight stands at the eastern edge of the complex.

Here, a towering mass rises from the swamp, dragging itself from the choked waters in dizzy mockery of healthy architecture, based around a pair of gigantic trees. A schizophrenic ships' graveyard, the melded corpses of half a dozen boats and caravels have been lashed and bolted together at differing heights among the trees, balanced precariously above the waters below. Ropes, ladders, and narrow walkways tangle through the structure, which towers to a height of a hundred feet. It looks almost as if some immense spider that spins ropes and rusted chain as webs has claimed these trees as its lair, and the six ships are its desiccated and partially eaten victims. The entire structure creaks and moans, as if it were ready to collapse yet somehow cannot.

Base Features

Although many of the specific locations in the Crimson Fleet base are detailed below, certain areas share features in common.

Water: The open water in the base is generally 10 feet deep with a layer of mud and silt that's a further 2 feet deep. It's a DC 10 Swim check to navigate these placid waters.

Boardwalks: The boardwalks and piers that allow easy movement through the area are generally 5 feet above sea level. While most of the boardwalks are solid, they creak alarmingly when walked upon, and Move Silently checks suffer a –2 penalty.

Ships: Most of the ships moored along the boardwalks and piers are seaworthy but abandoned at this time. They serve as barracks for the pirates who are currently at sea.

Rotten Wood: In several places, the boardwalks and ships have grown rotten. The denizens of the base know what sections are rotten, but to others it takes a DC 20 Spot check to notice an unsafe section. A Small or larger creature that steps onto a rotten square has a 30% chance of crashing through to the water or ground below (check once per square moved through). Rotten wood on the map is indicated by a greenish tinge.

Traps: The pirates have rigged traps in several locations so that a careless passerby has a 50% chance of stepping on the rigged plank. Doing so causes a poisoned spear to launch up from below or out of a nearby patch of bushes. Traps are indicated on the map with a red tinge.

Poison Spear Trap: CR 8; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (1d8+4/×3 plus poison, spear); poison (Huge spider venom, DC 16 Fortitude save resists, 1d8/1d8 Str); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 30.

Fen Rot: This hazardous slime grows in patches throughout the saltmarshes of Scuttlecove. Resembling a thick mat of greenish-brown algae that floats on the surface of shallow water, fen rot is similar in some regards to green slime, save that it can only consume animal matter—it has no effect on vegetable matter like wood or cloth. Against flesh and bone, though, the sludge quickly consumes and destroys. A character that enters a square with fen rot must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid contacting the stuff with exposed flesh. Characters wearing

medium armor gain a +2 bonus on this save, and those wearing heavy armor gain a +4 bonus. Characters who fall prone in the square suffer a –4 penalty to the save. Fen rot deals 2d4 points of Constitution damage per round while it devours flesh. On the first round of contact, it can be scraped off, but after that it must be frozen, burned, or cut away. Sunlight has no effect on the stuff, but anything that deals cold or fire damage or a *remove disease* spell destroys a patch.

Gibbets: In several places, gibbets hang from rusting iron posts rising from the waters. Each is locked with a masterwork padlock on a 1-inch-thick iron chain. Within each is a mad, emaciated prisoner, given only a few rags to wear and a few bones and moldy strips of cloth to sleep on. Each prisoner has been told that if they spot intruders and raise an alarm, they will be freed. Thus, despite their weariness and near starvation, they are desperate to spot something. The occupants have +2 Spot and Listen checks, and are all 1st-level human warriors. If silenced before they can raise an alarm, a DC 40 Diplomacy check is required to convince them that the PCs are here to help, at which point a prisoner begs for freedom. They know little about the base, but can give the PCs estimates about the number of enemies they'll be facing.

Inhabitants

The base is under-populated right now, as most of the Crimson Fleet is at sea, yet there still remains a large number of enemies who quickly rise up to oppose any intrusion. While the numerous areas of interest are detailed below, the Crimson Fleet base is a dynamic location. Once the alarm is raised or a fight starts, the denizens quickly react and move to defend the base.

The denizens of the base (areas **D1–D11**) react as a separate group from those who dwell in the Wreck itself (areas **E1–I5**); Cold Captain Wyther wants the guardians of the Wreck to remain there to defend it if the defenses of the outlying areas fail.

D1. The Thorngate

A tangled mass of thorny vines, rusting iron bars, and a wooden framework has been erected across a thirty-foot-wide channel leading from the open sea into the boggy estuary beyond. The barricade rises to a height of ten feet and extends into the water below; to either side, soggy wooden walkways overlook the plants.

This barricade was built to bar entry into the estuary via boat or skiff. When a boat or skiff desires passage through this area, the death slaad posted in area **D2** emerges to use *animate objects* to cause the Huge barricade to clatter noisily up onto a bank, allowing passage through the channel.

Barricade: Hardness 5; hp 120; Break DC 34.

D2. Thorngate Guardpost (EL 13)

The corners of this macabre chamber are littered with bones and bits of rancid meat. Several chains ending in hooks dangle from the sagging roof, and the badly mutilated body of a man hangs from them in a partially dismembered state.

Creature: A death slaad named Velzigarus dwells in this ignominious hovel, a bitter and surly creature conjured into and imprisoned in this shack via a *binding* spell cast by a man named **Zaliax Carvanxi** (CE male lemorian wizard 15, currently at sea commanding the roundup of the Crimson Fleet mutineers) at Cold Captain Wyther's request. The binding has an escape clause built into it; Velzigarus can go free once he kills 101 good-aligned humanoids. The partially dismembered corpse hanging in here is merely his 54th victim—until he tortures 47 more to death, he's stuck performing the duties of a gate guard for the Crimson Fleet. His main job is to use *animate objects* to open the thorngate at area **D1**, using the spell-like ability from his open north door since he cannot physically leave the building. In return for his humiliating service, Wyther periodically sends good-aligned prisoners to this shack for the slaad to murder, slowly doling out the means for Velziagarus' release.

If Velzigarus notices non-members of the Fleet attempting to bypass the Thorngate or hears combat erupt nearby, he does what he can with his ranged spell-like abilities to attempt to slay any PCs who look like they might be good-aligned.

Velzigarus, death slaad: hp 142; *Monster Manual* 231.

D3. Shrine Entrance

This building seems to be in relatively good repair compared to the sodden state of the others that squat upon the estuary shores. A strange and unpleasant scent, like mud dredged from the bed of a polluted lake mixed with the tang of wet fur, fills the air here. The walls are decorated with mauve tapestries depicting a horrific two-headed, tentacled monster standing atop a rock protruding from a surging ocean.

A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the creature depicted in the tapestries as Demogorgon.

D4. Altar of Demons (EL 13)

The ceiling of this square room rises to a height of twenty feet, yet the top half of the room is a network of crossbeams and joists. The smell of rancid mud and wet fur is nearly overwhelming here. The entire southwestern wall is decorated with a single thirty-foot-wide and ten-foot-tall tapestry that depicts an ocean's storm-tossed surface alive with hundreds of drowning human bodies. Tentacles and sharklike predators rise from the waters to feast on these souls in some locations, while in others reptilian monsters perched on wave-tossed rocks fish victims from the sea with long arms. At the center stands a roaring two-headed and tentacled monster, poised in a position of lordship over a court of demons. A wooden altar, its top and sides stained dark with crusted blood, squats before the blood-spattered tapestry.

The pirates of the Crimson Fleet pay lip service to Demogorgon, and as such rarely have the time or interest in visiting this shrine. Ziovayne, the orlath demon (see area **H1**) is perhaps this shrine's most common visitor, yet Cold Captain Wyther and a few others sometimes pay their demonic patron their respects here as well.

N
nw
ne
W
E
sw
se
S
D1
D2
D3
D4
D5
D6
D7
D8
D9
D10
D11
fen rot
trap
F1
F
F2
rotten
E1
E2
E3
The Anger
(40 feet)
G3A
G3B
G1
F
G2
E3
The Baeldictum
(100 feet)
H1
I1
I2
I3
The Black Sprite
H1
I4
The Glad
(80 feet)
I5
Below Decks
The
Two-Faced
Wretch
(60 feet)
H1
F2
F
G2
I4
F4
C
F3
E4
E5
The
Fortitude
G7
G6
G5
C
G4
The
Anger
H4
H2
C
H3
The
Two-Faced
Wretch
One square = 10 feet

Creature: Five bar-lgura Crimson Recruiters hunker on the rafters in the ceiling above, posted here as guardians by the clerics while they are at sea. The demons wait a few rounds after intruders enter this room to drop down and attack (unless the intruders begin defacing the shrine, in which case the demons attack at once). Each bar-lgura tries to abduct a single PC to a distant, dangerous location (such as the Wormcrawl Fissure, the Underdark, or even the Isle of Dread), leaving the PC there before teleporting back here to aid their kin against any PCs who resist the abduction.

Crimson Recruiters (5): hp 88 each; see page 79.

D5. Clerical Quarters

Four beds, their sheets wet with mildew and their mattresses stained and lumpy, sit on either side of this room. Between them stands a low table covered with black candles.

This chamber is home to four clerics of Demogorgon charged with maintaining this shrine. All four are currently at sea.

Treasure: Two of the black candles on the table are chaotic evil *candles of invocation.*

D6. Guardpost (EL 12)

This room features a rickety circular table with four equally rickety chairs placed around it.

Creatures: Not all of the Crimson Fleet is at sea, nor have all of Cold Captain Wyther's men all turned against him. A few loyalists remained behind when the rest set out to hunt down the mutineers. Four Crimson Fleet thugs are posted here, although they've been spending most of their time playing cards, drinking, and arguing with each other. Every 30 minutes, one of them takes a brief, five-minute patrol around the nearby piers. These thugs are quick to raise an alarm or join any fights.

Crimson Fleet Thugs (4): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

D7. Storage Shed

This large chamber is filled with barrels, crates, coils of rope, lumber, and large sheets of canvas. Narrow aisles wind aimlessly among the supplies.

The supplies consist of food, drinking water, repair materials, and other necessities. Nothing of real value is kept here.

D8. Guardpost (EL 12)

Apart from a single large sea chest against the south wall, this room's only furnishings are twelve bunk beds, stacked three high.

Creatures: A total of twelve Crimson Fleet thugs serve the area as guards. When they're not taking time off in Scuttlecove or on duty, they rest here. When the PCs arrive, four of them are resting here; they respond to a raised alarm in 1d4 rounds.

Crimson Fleet Thugs (4): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

D9. Watchtower (EL 14)

A circular stone tower broods on a stony islet in the middle of the estuary here. The tower itself is thirty feet tall, with a wooden roof and an open-air guard post atop it.

Creatures: With the exception of the Wreck itself, this tower is the tallest structure in the area. Normally staffed by four Crimson Fleet thugs, a fifth member of the fleet has taken up duty here, a bitter Crimson Fleet captain named Longshanks Le'shiv. Captain Le'shiv's ship was one of those absconded with by mutineers, and Cold Captain Wyther ordered him to remain behind and see to the defense of the base while the others set to sea. Captain Le'shiv hates the duty, but is too much of a coward to stand up to Cold Captian Wyther.

Captain Longshanks Le'shiv **CR 12**
Male lemorian rogue 8/fighter 2
CE Medium outsider (native)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +12
Languages Abyssal, Common
AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 18; improved uncanny dodge
hp 83 (10 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 20
Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +3; evasion
Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)
Melee +1 *rapier* +12/+7 (1d6+5/15–20 plus poison) and
+1 *dagger* +12/+7 (1d4+3/19–20) and sting +7 (1d6+2 plus poison)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +14 (1d8/19–20 plus poison)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +12
Atk Options sneak attack +4d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds, potion of water breathing* (2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
3/day—*charm monster* (DC 16), *command* (DC 13)
1/day—*dominate person* (DC 17), *fear* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 15)
Abilities Str 18, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +2
Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (dagger)
Skills Balance +18, Bluff +13, Climb +17, Craft (carpentry) +9, Intimidate +15, Jump +17, Profession (sailor) +12, Spot +12, Swim +11, Tumble +18
Possessions combat gear, +2 *studded leather armor*, +1 *rapier*, +1 *dagger*, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *ring of protection +2, ring of swimming*
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Wis. Le'shiv can poison a weapon with this venom as a standard action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (4): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

D10. Guest House (EL 16)

Although the walls of this building remain soggy and filthy, an attempt has been made to transform this large room into something approaching comfort. Thick canvas sheets hang from the ceiling rafters to par-

tition the room into several smaller areas, each containing a single bed, a nightstand, and a chair.

Creatures: With the recent alliance forged with the Seventh Coil, Cold Captain Wyther had his men fix up this abandoned building into a guest house for several yuan-ti guests. The yuan-ti are amused by the havoc Vanthus wreaked on their pirate allies, but have nonetheless pledged their support, and if the alarm is raised these assassins and slavers quickly mobilize.

Seventh Coil Assassins (4): hp 95 each; see page 49.

Seventh Coil Slavers (2): hp 69 each; see page 59.

D11. Condemned Shack (EL 15)

The ceiling of this shack has collapsed, leaving the floor strewn with moldy debris and shattered timber. Clouds of gnats hum in the air, and slumped against the rubble at the far end of the room is what appears to be a dead man wearing a suit of gleaming red chainmail and clutching an exotic-looking sword.

The floor of this building is actually collapsed, leaving a large hole that drops 5 feet into a pool of deep water. The creature that dwells here created an illusion of a rubble-choked floor (complete with a dead body to lure in the curious). Anyone who steps into the room falls into the water if they fail a DC 20 Reflex save.

A 1-foot-wide ledge remains along the edge of the building, all that actually remains of its floor. Moving along the slippery edge of the remaining floor near the building's walls is possible with a DC 15 Balance check. It's only a 5-foot-fall to the muddy, rubble-choked water below. The water itself is 5 feet deep in the western half of the room but drops into a 15-foot-deep bowl in the eastern half of the area.

Creature: Cold Captain Wyther's frequent travels to the Abyss via the wakeportal have had their affect on the ecosystem, since every time he crosses over, a wash of horrific fiendish life floods into the sea from the Abyss. The sackfish (see page 50) that have been plaguing the waters recently are merely the least of these aquatic invaders. On one of these return trips, a strange hateful menace came back with him. This was Vzorthys, an aquatic variant of the dreaded beholder known as an eye of the deep. It was intrigued by the strange creatures it found living here and followed Wyther's ship into the base. The monster ate several pirates before Cold Captain Wyther managed to defeat it. Wyther was, in turn, intrigued by the monster, and found its alien countenance so amusing that he spared its life and extended to it an offer to dwell here. Vzorthys accepted, and for the last year has dwelt in the waters below this shed. The other pirates avoid this section of the base now, and the buildings have fallen into ruin. Only Cold Captain Wyther visits the eye of the deep regularly, often simply to share stories of the wonders of the deep with it.

The eye of the deep is a 15-foot-diameter sphere of cartilage and leathery flesh. One large eye glares from its center above a mouth filled with sharklike teeth. Above the eye writhe two long eyestalks, while below the eye dangle a pair of long, powerful arms tipped with crablike claws. Vzorthys has developed a strange fondness for the pirates, and despite the fact that now and then it catches a drunk one and eats him, it views them as its pets. It's not quite fond enough of them to aid them in a fight, however, unless Cold Captain Wyther calls for his aid.

VZORTHYS **CR 16**

Advanced elite fiendish eye of the deep
CE Huge aberration (aquatic, extraplanar)
Lords of Madness 138, *Monster Manual* 108
Init +5; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +31, Spot +31
Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Beholder

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20
hp 348 (24 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 25
Fort +19, **Ref** +7, **Will** +16

Spd 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good), swim 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +25 (3d6+11/19–20) and bite +25 (3d6+5/19–20)
Ranged eye rays +16 touch
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +37
Atk Options constrict 2d6+5, improved grab (claw), smite good 1/day (+20 damage)
Special Actions baleful flash
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)
At will—*persistent image* (DC 18)

Abilities Str 32, Dex 10, Con 30, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 17
Feats Ability Focus (baleful flash, eye rays), Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite, claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw), Multiattack
Skills Listen +31, Spot +31

Baleful Flash (Su) As a free action, Vzorthys can generate a flash of light from its central eye once per round. All creatures in a 60-foot cone are blinded for 2d6 rounds and stunned for half that duration. A DC 34 Fortitude save negates the stunning and reduces the blindness effect to dazzled. Sightless creatures are immune to this attack.

Eye Rays (Su) Each of an eye of the deep's two eyestalks can produce a magical ray once per round as a free action. Each ray has a range of 150 feet and a save DC of 27 (caster level 12th). The eye effects include:
Hold Monster: Target must make a Will save or be affected as though by the spell.
Cone of Cold: This works like the spell, but affects only the creature touched by the ray (Reflex save for half).

Treasure: The eye of the deep has gathered a stash of treasure since its arrival here. Scattered along the pool bottom in the eastern half of this area are 4,960 gp, a rotten wooden cask containing 13 pink pearls worth 100 gp each, a +4 *defending cold iron dagger*, a *mask of the skull*, and a red crystal *staff of evocation* (31 charges).

The Wreck

Even a cursory glance at the strange and imposing structure that looms over the Crimson Fleet base should be enough to cause the observer to doubt its structural integrity. The ropes and chains that fix the suspended ships in place hardly look to be sufficient, and in some places the hulls hang over prodigious empty gulfs. A DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check is enough to confirm this observation—the Wreck, by all calculations, is an impossible structure.

What holds it together is a cunning combination of architectural genius and

Lemorians

The leaders of the Crimson Fleet are outsiders known as lemorians, humanoids transformed by a secret process in the city of Lemoriax into half-demons. Lemorians have large patches of black scaly skin (in some cases covering their entire bodies), claws, pointed ears, horns, red eyes, batlike wings, small fangs, and long tails tipped with poisonous stingers.

Lemorians use the rules for half-fiends as detailed in the *Monster Manual*, but with the following modifications:

- Instead of a bite attack, they gain a poison sting attack (damage remains unchanged from bite attack). The DC to resist the poison is equal to 10 + half the lemorian's Hit Dice + his Constitution modifier. Its initial and secondary damage are the same: 1d6 Wisdom damage. A lemorian often poisons his melee weapons with this venom.
- Ability score increases become Str +4, Dex +4, Con +2, Int +2, Cha +4
- Spell-like abilities change as follows:

HD	Abilities
1–2	*command* 3/day
3–4	*suggestion*
5–6	*fear*
7–8	*charm monster* 3/day
9–10	*dominate person*
11–12	*mass suggestion*
13–14	*unholy aura* 3/day, *unhallow*
15–16	*mass charm monster*
17–18	*summon monster IX* (demons only)
19–20	*dominate monster*

magical support. The placement of the anchoring ropes, chains, beams, and even the trees themselves do much of the work, while the weight of the suspended ships is alleviated by the application of magical "anchor points" that function similarly to *immovable rods*. These anchor points exist along the underside of each ship, and help to fix the structure in space. Bringing the Wreck down would require the dispelling of the majority of these anchor points; since they're effectively magic items, a *dispel magic* only negates one for 1d4 rounds.

The numerous rope bridges that connect the ships are 3 feet wide, and can be traversed with a DC 12 Balance check. Ladders are somewhat narrow and have slippery rungs, but can be climbed with a DC 10 Climb check. The wood that comprises the Wreck itself is not only damp, but has been alchemically treated to resist burning, effectively gaining fire resistance 5. Each deck is fitted with several alarm bells that, when rung, can be heard throughout the complex.

Cold Captain Wyther rules the Wreck with calculating cruelty, yet his fearsome reputation was nothing compared to Vanthus as a death knight. His leadership took a hit when Vanthus stormed in and took control of the Fleet's resources several days ago, and Wyther seethes with bitter rage as a result.

The following encounter areas assume the Wreck is not on alert. Where appropriate, an encounter's Development section details what changes occur to the area when the Wreck is on alert.

E1. The Fortitude (EL 9)

The deck of this old merchant caravel is pitted with deep scratches and gouges. The ship's mainmast remains in place, rising nearly to the lower hull of the ship above. Tattered sails hang limply from the mast.

The deck of this ship is kept relatively clear. The scratches on its surface are from the monster that dwells up on the foc's'le.

Trap: The door to the southeast just below the foc's'le is kept locked (Open Lock DC 30) and warded with a *symbol of insanity* inscribed on its surface. All of the denizens of the Wreck and the surrounding base have been attuned to the symbol.

Symbol of Insanity: CR 9; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*symbol of insanity*, 15th-level wizard, DC 25 Will resists); multiple targets (all creatures within 60 feet); Search DC 33; Disable Device 33.

E2. Fortitude Foc's'le (EL 11)

A ruined ballista lies in a heap against the bow of the ship.

Creature: An elephantine retriever, called up from the Abyss by the orlath demon Ziovayne (area **H1**), dwells on this deck, a tireless guardian that watches the southern saltmarsh for anything that attempts to reach the Wreck from that direction. It roars into life to attack any creature that comes within 100 feet, remaining on deck but using its eye rays to blast foes.

Retriever: hp 135; *Monster Manual* 46.

E3. Southern Bridgeway

This 4-foot-wide, 60-foot tall wooden piling leans at a slight angle. A pair of rope bridges connects to it, allowing movement from the *Fortitude's* foc's'le (area **E2**) up to the *Anger's* deck (area **G1**).

E4. Prison

Iron-barred doors close off four cells in this area. Each cell is a filthy, damp area furnished with a single bucket, a heap of moldy straw and rags, and a wooden trough near the door to hold food.

If any PCs are captured by Crimson Recruiters, they may end up in one of these cells, naked except for a few rags with their gear stacked haphazardly in area **H4**.

Creature: One prisoner languishes in one of the cells here, a badly beaten lemorian named Ratline Sid. Until recently a captain in the Crimson Fleet, Ratline had always felt himself a better choice as leader for the fleet than Captain Wyther. When Vanthus left the base in chaos, Ratline was one of five captians who rose up in mutiny. The other four have escaped to sea, but Ratline grossly overestimated his own skills in combat and Wyther beat him within an inch of his life. The captain had Ratline thrown into a cell here, where he's languished ever since. The other pirates frequently forget to feed him, and when they do they take the time to beat him unconscious as a way to prove their loyalty to Captain Wyther, who's kept Ratline alive only because he hasn't yet thought up a cruel and painful enough method of executing him.

Ratline is near death by the time the PCs arrive. He feebly struggles to catch their attention, but his broken legs and crushed jaw transform every motion into agony. If he's healed, he can't thank the PCs enough and promises to help them any way he can, if only to

get revenge on Wyther. He can provide the PCs with a rough estimate of the Wreck's defenses, but hasn't been below decks in the *Two-Faced Wretch*. He can confirm that the fleet's just finished delivering dozens of black pearls, but he's not sure why they were giving the things away when they could have sold them again and stolen them back and sold them a dozen times over. He knows that the pearls were stored belowdecks on the *Anger*, but points out that they're all gone now. If asked about Vanthus or Lavinia, he can relate the story of the death knight's arrival in detail, adding that the woman he brought back was a mighty fine catch but that Vanthus kept her at his side the whole time. They finally left on Captain Wyther's ship, the *Crimson Scar*, several days ago. Ratline's not sure where Vanthus went, but he does know that he activated the *wakeportal* on Wyther's ship to travel to Gaping Maw. If the PCs express an interest in following them to Gaping Maw, he scoffs openly at their stupidity. Under further threat, he quickly adds that there is one more *wakeportal* in the Wreck treasury, belowdecks on the *Two-Faced Wretch*, "if you fools is really set on suicide."

You can use Ratline to answer any other questions the PCs might have. He's been a member of the fleet for some time, and has even been to Lemoriax on Gaping Maw twice since his initial transformation into a lemorian. If asked for more details on Gaping Maw, Lemoriax, Demogorgon, or the process by which he was transformed into a half-fiend, Ratline grows silent. He may hate Captain Wyther and think him a coward, but Demogorgon's a different matter entirely. He has little to say on the subject other than that he's started to think that letting those fancy bat-winged ladies in Lemoriax put him in that big pool of sludge that turned him fiendish may not have been a great idea.

As helpful as Ratline may be, he's still a vile, despicable creature. He's also a coward. At the first opportunity he attempts to flee. If the PCs manage to keep him around until they confront Captain Wyther, Ratline tries to betray the PCs by attacking them in hopes of impressing Wyther. Wyther's had enough of him, though, and at best his betrayal buys the PCs a round while the Cold Captain finishes Ratline off.

Captain Ratline Sid: hp 83 (currently 0); page 64 (Captain Longshanks Le'shiv).

E5. Forward Hold

This large area is packed tight with crates, ropes, lumber, and other supplies. Most of it looks damaged by the moisture.

There's nothing of much interest stored here, although there are plenty of places to hide.

F1. The Black Sprite (EL 10)

The upper deck of this ship is strewn with ropes, crates, and stacks of lumber, but the main deck is free of clutter. The mainmast remains intact and her tattered sail, depicting a wicked-looking black devil, still flutters in the wind.

Once the ship of a half-fey pirate named Avlash Redlegs, the *Black Sprite* was Cold Captain Wyther's first conquest.

Creatures: Two Crimson Fleet pirates patrol this deck at all times.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (2): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

Development: If the Wreck is on alert, the ten pirates found in the chambers below take stations here. They do not disembark to attack PCs in the surrounding estuary, but if they come within range of their crossbows, the pirates won't hesitate to take a few shots.

F2. Northern Bridgeway

A rope bridge leads from the deck of the *Black Sprite* (area **F1**) to this piling, and a 50-foot high ladder leads up from the bridge to the deck of the *Two-Faced Wretch* above (area **H1**).

F3. Galley (EL 13)

A long table sits in the center of this room. To the north, an iron ladder leads up to a trap door. A rusty stove sits in a nook to the southwest, and the entire southern wall consists of the side of the immense tree the structure hangs from.

Creatures: When the Wreck's not on alert, several Crimson Fleet pirates spend the hours here, gambling, eating, and drinking in this galley. Despite their relaxed attitude, they react quickly and cruelly to intrusions or alarms.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (6): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

F4. Barracks (EL 12)

Six cramped bunkbeds line the walls of this barracks.

Creatures: An additional four pirates sleep in the bunks here. If the alarm is raised, it'll take them 1d4+2 rounds to wake, gather their gear, and move out to aid their fellows.

Crimson Fleet Pirates (4): hp 70 each; see page 78 (Scuttlecove thug).

G1. The Anger

The deck of this old keelboat is cluttered with crates, lumber, barrels of ballista bolts, coils of rope, and other supplies. A thick tangle of rigging extends from the tree's trunk to the ship's railings and forward mast.

The *Anger* serves as living quarters for any Crimson Fleet captains who, for whatever reason, don't currently command a ship.

The deck of the *Anger* is difficult terrain due to the clutter.

Development: If the alarm is raised, the four Crimson Fleet captains from area **G4** quickly clamber up to this deck. Two go to each of the ballistas (areas **G3A** and **G3B**) to use them against anyone they can see. If they see invaders board the Wreck, they move to intercept.

G2. Anger's Foc's'le

An iron-and-wood ladder leads 10 feet up this short mast to a crow's nest. A rope ladder affixed to this nest leads up to area **H1**.

G3. Ballista Decks

A ballista sits on a swiveling turret atop each of these decks. Both ballistas can fire down onto the deck of the *Black Sprite* (area **F1**). The ballista at area **G3A** can fire in an arc from area **D6** to **D10**, while the one at **G3B** can fire in an arc from **D8** to **E3**. A barrel of 20 ballista bolts sits near to each weapon. Rules for firing ballistas appear on page 100 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

G4. Guard Room (EL 16)

A round table surrounded by a half-dozen chairs sits in the center of this room; a dented lantern rests atop it. Hanging from the walls are six hammocks.

Creatures: This room serves as both a guard post and barracks for shipless captains. Currently, there are four such men here; Two-Stubs Vexir, Casketbreath Gaven, Gashgape Neften, and Rumbelly Wade. The four lemorians are particularly angry that they didn't get to accompany the others to sea to gather the mutineers, but unlike Longshanks Le'shiv (area **D9**) they're resigned to their fate. They view any alarm as an opportunity for much-needed mayhem.

Crimson Fleet Captains (4): hp 83; page 64 (Captain Longshanks Le'shiv).

G5. Wyther's Shrine

A grotesque scrimshaw statue of a towering two-headed monster dominates the chamber. The statue is composed of numerous huge whalebones that have been filed and fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle—the entire thing has an unsettling quality about it, almost as if the two skull-like faces could see. An iron brazier filled with ashes sits between the statue's feet, and clutched in its tentacles is a single curious metal orb.

This statue depicts Demogorgon, but this chamber is much more than a shrine to the Prince of Demons. As one of Demogorgon's primary Material Plane agents, this statue was delivered to Cold Captain Wyther as a means for the pirate to contact the Prince of Demons to receive advice.

The metal globe clutched by the statue is a puzzle orb made up of interlocking slats and panels. Twisted and folded in the proper manner, the orb opens like a metal rose and establishes a link to Gaping Maw. A DC 25 Intelligence check or Disable Device check is required to correctly unlock this puzzle orb. On a failed check, serrated blades lance out of the orb to slash at the user's hands and wrists, severing tendons with a disturbing accuracy, inflicting 1d6 points of Dexterity damage (DC 15 Reflex save negates).

If someone successfully opens the puzzle orb, the device floats into the air as a mauve haze seeps from the brazier below. The haze quickly fills the room with a sickening stink of rotting fish and seaweed—any creatures in the room who are not immune to poison must make a DC 20 Fortitude save to avoid becoming nauseated for 1d6 rounds. The puzzle orb can be activated in this manner once per day.

As the foul mist fills the room, the statue of Demogorgon suddenly seems

to slither to awful life. Its surface fills in with rancid greens and blues and sickly yellows as it takes on the fearful countenance of the Prince of Demons. His two simian heads scowl, writhing above his serpentine body on long snaky necks that make an obscene sucking noise. Two tentacle arms come into view, dripping, and he moves suddenly in long strides as though his body is dislocated. The two heads look around the room, then settle their gazes upon the one who activated the statue, watching expectantly. At this time, the user instantaneously realizes how he can use the statue—he may either ask up to ten yes/no questions (as if he were using *commune* to contact Demogorgon), or he may ask a single question and receive a short answer.

With each yes/no question answered, there's a cumulative 10% chance that Demogorgon notices the fact that the statue is being used. This chance rises to 100% if a short answer question is asked. If this occurs, the statue answers the question but then immediately roars in rage, loudly enough to alert the entire Wreck. The statue's tentacles crash against the walls of the room, and then its gaze turns back down and it speaks in a horrifically sibilant voice, one head speaking one sentence while the other speaks the next. "I know you. You seek to oppose me. But you are mortal. I shall be with you soon. You shall know my wrath!"

With that, the statue howls again, just before it explodes in a blast of fire and acid. All creatures in this room immediately take 10d6 fire damage and 10d6 acid damage—a DC 20 Reflex save halves the damage. The explosion also tears a hole in the *Anger's* hull. All creatures in the room must make a DC 15 Reflex save or fall through the hole, plummeting 60 feet to the deck of the *Fortitude* below (area **E1**).

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs use this shrine to learn something about Demogorgon's plans, grant them a CR 16 experience award.

G6. War Room

A U-shaped table sits in this room, surrounded by wooden chairs. Dozens of scrolls, lie heaped on the table, weighed down by several gold paperweights that resemble ships at sea. On the far wall hangs a map of the known seas and civilized lands.

This room is where the Crimson Fleet worked out its raids, including shipments of *shadow pearls* to various large cities of the northern world. An investigation of the numerous notes, logs, and ledgers on the table reveals the fact that they've sent *shadow pearls* to no less than 35 different cities, but aside from the fact that each of these deliveries was accepted by an unnamed but powerful ally, the exact locations are nowhere to be found. Further investigation of the notes here turns up several references to an event called the "savage tide," and while some of these notes seem to indicate that the savage tide will be occurring soon, an exact date is missing.

Treasure: The seven paperweights are made of solid gold and worth 700 gp apiece.

G7. Ziovayne's Chambers (EL 15)

This long room is split into two sections. To the starboard, near the door, stands an oak bookcase, its shelves heaped with tomes of all shapes and sizes. A large padded chair sits nearby. To port, an oversized bed is flanked by an ivory washtub and an elegant writing desk.

Creature: Captain Wyther's favored guardian, an orlath demon bonded to him as a gift by Demogorgon himself, prowls this deck when the Wreck is on alert. Named Ziovayne, the demon enjoys the physical sensations afforded by his humanoid form almost as much as he enjoys reading about the great wars of the Material Plane. If the Wreck's not on alert, he can be found here, either reading or frolicking violently with his latest plaything, a heavily tattooed Crimson Fleet captain named Bilgerut Norah (50% chance of either). In either case, Ziovayne orders his lover to attack the party first while he watches, a command the woman takes to with glee. Once she's brought below 40 hit points, Ziovayne sighs heavily and joins her, assuming his true form once he's already in melee so he can take a full attack with all of his scimitars as a surprise.

Ziovayne, orlath: hp 184; See Appendix.

Captain Bilgerut Norah: hp 83; page 64 (Captain Longshanks Le'shiv).

Treasure: The collection of history books includes seven rare tomes worth 300 gp apiece.

H1. The Two-Faced Wretch

The deck of this ship is cluttered with coils of rope, crates, and other nautical supplies. A horrendous figurehead of a demonic two-faced abomination hangs from the ship's bow, which has been extended into a square platform that provides an unobstructed view of the surrounding saltmarsh.

The *Two-Faced Wretch* was Captain Wyther's first ship, and serves him now on the Wreck as his home. Treat the cluttered deck as difficult terrain.

Development: If the alarm is raised, Ziovayne waits on this deck in the form of a lemorian pirate. He hopes to lure the PCs into melee reach so he can assume his true form and make a full attack before they realize what they're up against. Until then, he observes the battle on the Wreck as best he can, using his spell-like abilities on any PCs in range and keeping Wyther appraised of developments via telepathy.

H2. Ready Room

This room contains a single round table and several chairs.

Cold Captain Wyther uses this room to meet with his captains in small groups, or when he needs to speak privately with a guest.

H3. Captain's Quarters (EL 19)

A huge canopied bed, complete with diaphanous silk curtains hanging from its sides, dominates this sumptuous chamber. To the stern, a locked cupboard sits in a nook near the door.

Creature: Captain Wyther, the legendary commander of the Crimson Fleet, resides here. He often strolls about the decks of the *Two-Faced Wretch* overseeing the activities of the occupants and barking out obscenities to his crew. The captain is a barrel-chested man with ruddy skin. Vain to the point of eschewing heavier armor entirely, his demonic features accent his handsome appearance with a cruel edge. Until recently supremely confident in his abilities, the ease with which Vanthus usurped his control has left him deeply shaken. As a result, when the alarm is raised, he does not immediately join his men in battle, instead relying on telepathic updates from Ziovayne and offering the excuse that he needs to stay belowdecks to guard the treasury.

Cold Captain Wyther **CR 19**

Male lemorian rogue 2/fighter 4/scarlet corsair 4/dread pirate 6
CE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, native)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Abyssal, Common, Yuan-ti

AC 29, touch 19, flat-footed 24
hp 172 (16 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 26
Fort +17, **Ref** +20, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)
Melee* *+3 icy burst cold iron bastard sword* +24/+19/+14 (1d10+18/17–20 [+3d6 plus 1d10 cold on crit] plus 1d6 cold plus poison) and
+1 *frost cold iron dagger* +21 (1d4+7/19–20 [+3d6 on crit] plus 1d6 cold plus poison) and
sting +15 (1d6+4 [+3d6 on crit] plus poison)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +23
Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Improved Feint, Power Attack, acrobatic charge, corsair's feint, smite good 1/day (+16 damage), sneak attack +3d6
Special Actions scourge of the seas
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of lesser restoration* (2)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)
3/day—*charm monster* (DC 19), *command* (DC 16), *unholy aura* (DC 23)
1/day—*dominate person* (DC 20), *fear* (DC 19), *mass charm monster* (DC 22), *mass suggestion* (DC 21), *suggestion* (DC 18), *unhallow*
*3-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 26, Dex 16, Con 22, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 20
SQ fearsome reputation, sailor's step, seamanship, steady stance, trapfinding
Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Feint, Melee Weapon Mastery (slashing), Power Attack, Quick Draw, Telling Blow, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)
Skills Appraise +9, Balance +22, Bluff +24, Climb +16, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (sailor) +22, Swim +17, Tumble +22, Use Rope +7
Possessions combat gear, *+4 leather armor, +3 icy burst cold iron bastard sword, +1 frost cold iron dagger, gauntlets of ogre power +6, bracers of health +6* (as *amulet of health +6*), *amulet of natural armor +3, cloak of protection +4, boots of speed, ring of protection +4*, gold earrings worth 2,500 gp, keys to all locks on the Wreck

Acrobatic Charge (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther can charge over difficult terrain.
Corsair's Feint (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther may make a feint as a free action once every 2d4 rounds.
Fearsome Reputation (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther is a dishonorable pirate, and gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks.
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 21, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Wis. Cold Captain Wyther can poison a weapon with this venom as a standard action. The save DC is Constitution-based.
Sailor's Step (Ex) When aboard a ship and wearing nothing more than light armor, Cold Captain Wyther gains a +2 dodge bonus to his Armor Class. This bonus is included in his stats above.
Scourge of the Seas (Ex) When Cold Captain Wyther uses Intimidate to demoralize foes, the attempt affects all enemies within 30 feet who can see and hear him; the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to his Charisma modifier (5 rounds).This is a mind-affecting ability.
Seamanship (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther adds his dread pirate class level to his Profession (sailor) checks; allies within sight or hearing gain half this number on their Profession (sailor) checks.
Steady Stance (Ex) Cold Captain Wyther is not flat-footed while balancing or climbing, and gains a +6 bonus on Balance and Climb checks to avoid being knocked prone when he takes damage.
Feats Melee Weapon Mastery (*Player's Handbook II* 81) grants a +2 bonus on attack rolls and a +2 bonus on damage rolls with all slashing melee weapons. Telling Blow lets Cold Captian Wyther deal his sneak attack damage whenever he scores a critical hit on a target, in addition to damage from his critical hit.

Tactics: Captain Wyther joins combat once it appears his men have the PCs on the ropes, emerging onto the deck of the *Two-Faced Wretch* to issue challenges before swooping down to assault fleeing PCs. Alternately, once the PCs reach the deck of the *Black Sprite*, he gathers enough courage to confront them 1d4 rounds after they begin fighting Ziovayne.

Once he's in combat, though, Captain Wyther's bravado quickly returns. In the heat of battle, he barks threats and profanities and fights with style and grace. He's fond of charging over difficult terrain, using Bull Rush against non-flying opponents and Power Attack against anyone, increasing his Power Attack by 2 points each successive round until he starts missing. Wyther very much prefers melee combat, and resorts to his spell-like abilities only against foes he can't reach with his sword.

Already shamed once by Vanthus, Wyther views this battle with the PCs as a chance to redeem his lost honor. As a result, he doesn't even consider surrender or escape, and fights to the bitter end.

Treasure: A pair of *+1 daggers* coated with lemorian venom are concealed in a hidden panel of the bed's headboard. A DC 25 Search check reveals the panel, which can be opened with a flick of the wrist as a free action. Also kept in here is a neatly folded paper that lists the following spells, in order: *fear, rage, crushing despair, crushing despair, rage, fear,* and *Tasha's hideous laughter.* Wyther uses this list as a code to help him remember the combination to the *Iron Chest of Hathruman* (see area **H4**).

The locked cabinet (Open Locks DC 40) contains several different specimens of fine clothing—seven in all, each worth 200 gp. A shelf above the clothes contains Wyther's private collection of rare wines, ales, mead, and grog. There are a dozen bottles here, each worth 500 gp.

H4. Treasury (EL 18)

The doorway to this room is both locked (Open Locks DC 40) and trapped (see Trap, below).

The walls of this area are plated in what appears to be lead that shimmers with sparkling energy. A single long table sits against the wall immediately to the door's left. A few chairs sit nearby, and a spherical object the size of a human head sits atop the table, covered by a deep purple cloth. The contents of the rest of this room leave little doubt as to its purpose. Sacks of coins, sea chests too full to be properly closed, heaps of silks, suits of partially assembled armor, tapestries, mounds of fine furs and clothing, jewelry boxes, metal coffers, and racks of weapons line the port and starboard walls of the chamber, leaving an open area in the center were one might stand and admire the collection. This is, without a doubt, the treasury of the Crimson Fleet.

This chamber is perhaps the most well-protected chamber in the Wreck. The lead-lined walls prevent many divination spells seeing into the room. Furthermore, the chamber is protected by a chaotic evil *forbiddance* spell (CL 16th), and the lead-lined walls are also lined with permanent *walls of force* with the exception of the doorway. If the Wreck is burned to the ground, this chamber remains intact.

Creature: Just as he had the death slaad Velzigarus bound to area **D2** as a guardian, Wyther has placed a powerful outsider here to serve as the treasury's defender. This menace is Ghourgos, a powerful yagnoloth. Standing nearly 16 feet tall, this hulking yugoloth has red, scaly hide and a small skull-like head framed by large ears that almost resemble bat wings. His right arm is small and atrophied, the size of a human's arm, while his left is enormous and grossly overdeveloped. In Hades, Ghourgos was the lord of a necropolis, and his anger at being turned into a mere treasure guardian fuels his wrath when intruders visit him. Wyther has made vague promises to free Ghourgos one day, and the monster's hope that the captain wasn't lying is the only reason he allows the Captain in here and respects his wishes to leave the treasure undamaged.

GHOURGOS **CR 18**

Male advanced yagnoloth
NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, yugoloth)
Monster Manual II 203
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +31, Spot +1
Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 30, touch 16, flat-footed 28
hp 299 (26 HD); **DR** 15/good
Immune acid, poison
Resist cold 10, fire 10, electricity 10; **SR** 25
Fort +21, **Ref** +17, **Will** +17

Spd 50 ft.
Melee *+1 keen lonsword* +26/+21/+16/+11 (2d6+21/17–20) and claw +26 (1d8+20 plus stunning blow)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +26; **Grp** +40
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, stunning blow
Special Actions breath weapon, energy drain
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
3/day—*shocking grasp*
*10-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 30, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 16
SQ muscular arm
Feats Cleave, Improved Natural Armor (4), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Bluff +32, Climb +39, Concentration +35, Diplomacy +34, Intimidate +34, Jump +47, Knowledge (the planes) +31, Listen +31, Sense Motive +31, Spot +31
Possessions *+1 keen longsword, ring of protection +5*

Breath Weapon (Su) A yagnoloth can exhale a cloud of acid as a standard action once every 1d4 rounds. This cloud fills any adjacent five-foot square for 1 round. Any character in that square (including anyone who moves through it) must make a DC 29 Reflex save or take 2d6 points of acid damage and become stunned for an equal number of rounds.

Energy Drain (Su) A yagnoloth can bestow 1d4 negative levels on any helpless or stunned target as a full-round action by pressing its face to the victim's body. It's a DC 29 Fortitude save to remove each negative level.

Muscular Arm (Ex) Although technically the yagnoloth's secondary attack, the monster retains its full Strength bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls made with its claw.

Stunning Blow (Ex) A character struck by a yagnoloth's claw must make a DC 29 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d8 rounds.

Trap: The door to this room is protected by a chaining energy drain trap; anyone who attempts to open the door without the proper key (carried by Captain Wyther) is struck by a black beam that inflicts 2d4 negative levels. Every other creature within 30 feet is also struck by the ray, but those struck only take 1d4 negative levels.

Chain *Energy Drain* Trap: CR 12; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, 2d4 or 1d4 negative levels for 24 hours, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

In addition, one of the chests within the room is trapped. This is a curious iron chest sitting near the bow. Decorated by seven gargoyle faces that stare out in all directions interspersed with dancing angels, this is a legendary chest indeed. A DC 25 Knowledge (history) check reveals it as the legendary *Iron Chest of Hathruman*, a chest so wicked it was considered to have a will of its own. Hathruman was a notorious arcane trickster held as a legend in trapmaking circles. Dozens of boxes, coffers, cases, arks, and other vessels bear his name, but he only created one chest.

The chest is in fact a complex trap. Each of the seven gargoyle faces can be manipulated to change their expression from anger to horror to sorrow to laughter. By setting the faces to the proper combination of expressions in the proper order, the chest can be opened. The correct combination, working clockwise from

the front, is horror, anger, sorrow, sorrow, anger, horror, and laughter. Once all expressions are set to the proper combination, the lid can be lifted with ease.

An attempt to lift the lid when the proper combination is not set triggers the traps and causes the faces to all reset to surprise. Each improperly set face creates a different magical effect that targets the person who tried to open the chest, as detailed below:

Anger: Magic missile (5 missiles).

Sorrow: Bestow curse (DC 16, –6 decrease to a random ability score).

Laughter: Confusion (DC 16)

Horror: Phantasmal killer (DC 16)

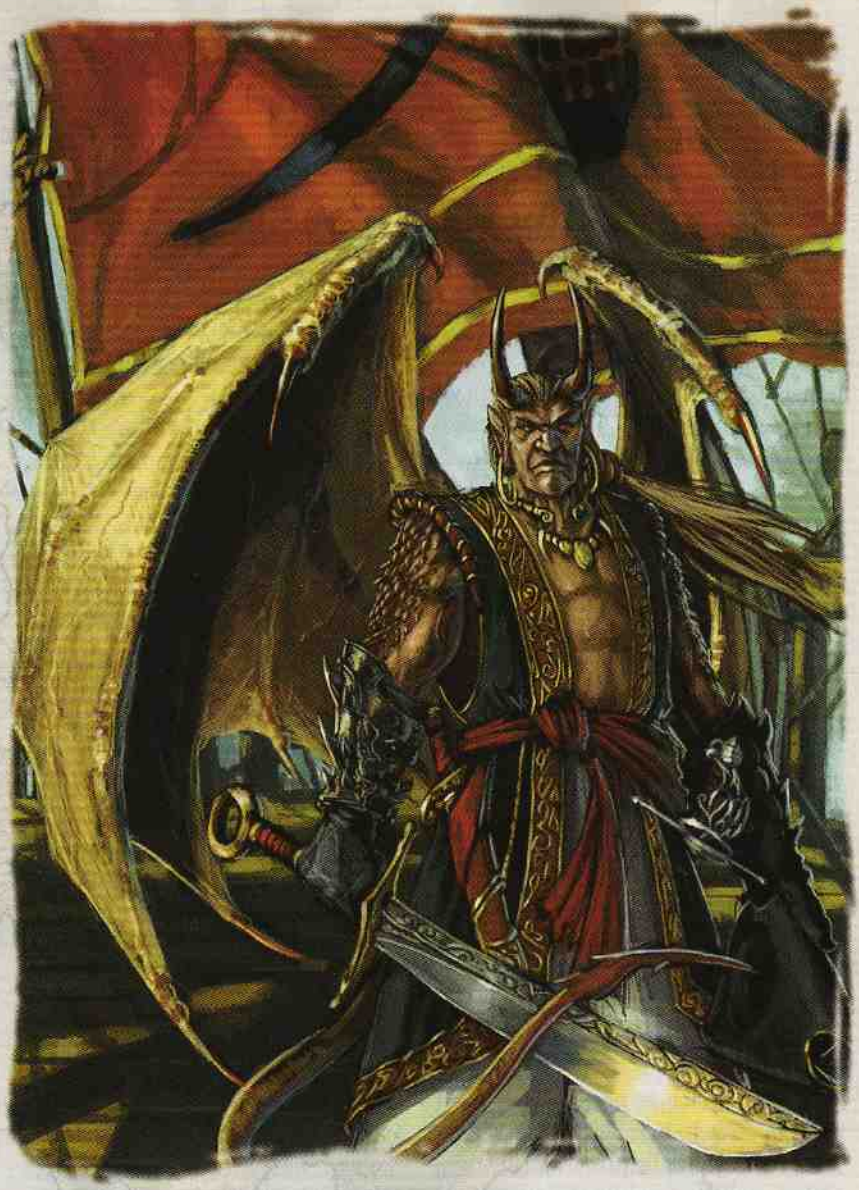
The spell effects all function at caster level 15th. When the trap activates, faces whose expressions are set correctly do not activate their trap, so that observant PCs can, by process of elimination, eventually work out the correct combination to the lock, provided they can survive triggering the traps that often.

Use of Disable Device to bypass this trap requires a DC 35 check for each face, followed by a DC 40 Open Lock check for each face. Failure to open a lock automatically resets the trap.

***Iron Chest of Hathruman*:** CR 16; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; multiple effects (see above); Search DC 35; Disable Device DC 35.

Treasure: The spherical object on the table is a *crystal ball with telepathy* that Captain Wyther uses to communicate with his captains while they are at sea.

The rest of the treasure in this chamber represents one of the largest hordes the PCs are likely to discover in the Savage Tide Adventure Path. The exact details of what treasures lie heaped and forgotten in this chamber should be tailored to your campaign, but in a nutshell consists of 300,000 cp, 110,000 sp, 28,000 gp, 1,300 pp, 10,000 gp in gems and jewelry, 8,000 gp in masterwork weapons and armor, 4,200 gp in rare silks and furs, 5,600 gp in fine clothing and tapestries, 6,000 gp in rare and exotic alchohol, and 16,000 gp in gold and silver bars. The total value of this incredible treasure is 104,800 gp. In addition, the gear of any captured PCs have been placed here for storage.



The *Iron Chest of Hathruman* contains even more treasure. Neatly organized in its multiple compartments are half a dozen black pearls of great size worth 250 gp each, a gold crown set with four rough emeralds worth 1,200 gp, a dozen bags of gold coins containing 500 gp each, and a legendary gemstone—the Athrinoord Stone, a ruby of almost impossible size and beauty. The Athrinoord Stone has the blood of two dozen owners staining its long history, and legend holds that those who try to claim it as their own are destined for quick deaths. A DC 30 Knowledge (history) check reveals this information. The Athrinoord Stone is worth 25,000 gp.

Also kept within the *Iron Chest of Hathruman* is a spare *wakeportal*, one that Wyther keeps on hand should the one aboard the *Crimson Scar* be lost. A *wakeportal* is a magical gemstone that affixes to a ship's prow or figurehead. Once affixed, it grants the ship the ability to sail from the Material Plane to the Abyssian Ocean. Details on this magic item are presented in the next adventure, "Into the Maw."

I1. The Baeldictum

The deck of this ship is merely that—a deck. The underlying hull and lower decks are gone, the ship's rotting and wet ribs hanging down like the dangling legs of some enormous insect. It appears as if a fight recently took place here, as the deck is sticky with dried blood and bits of rotting flesh.

Captain Wyther uses the deck of this ex-slave galley to address all of his captains and key crewmembers. The majority of the initial fighting of the mutiny took place here, and the pirates haven't bothered to clean the mess yet.

I2. The Crow's Walk (EL 16)

A rope bridge hangs between the mainmast of the ship below and this circular platform that surrounds the central tree of the strange structure.

This platform is the highest point in the Wreck, at a height of 120 feet.

Creatures: Three Sisters of Lamentation, late of the Birdcage but having now thrown their lot in with the Crimson Fleet, nest in this area. Unsatisfied with the money to be had at the Birdcage, these three sought out Captain Wyther and hired on as guardians. So far, they've not seen nearly as much money as they'd hoped, and as a result are slow to step in to aid in the Wreck's defense. They don't attack until intruders make it all the way up to the Baeldictum, or until Captain Wyther orders them to do so.

Sisters of Lamentation (3): hp 108 each; see page 56.

Treasure: The harpies' pay so far consists of a single large bag of 1,200 gp.

I3. Lookout

This platform is supported by a single thick piling and holds a ballista. A barrel of ammunition for the weapon sits nearby.

This ballista's firing arc covers a zone from area **E3** clockwise to **D8**.

Development: If the alarm is raised, Bilgerut Norah (see area **G7**) moves up here to use the ballista against any enemies that come into her sights.

I4. Vanthus's Lair

This small building seems to have once served as a combination study, kitchen, and bedroom, although most of the personal touches are missing, as if taken away. All that remains are a bed, a table, a few chairs, a stove, and an empty bookshelf.

Originally the home of Zaliax Carvanxi, Captain Wyther's wizardly ally, Vanthus kicked the wizard out when he returned as a death knight and spent several days here laying his plans. There's little remaining here now, save for one well-hidden clue.

Lavinia was kept here for some time after Vanthus returned with her as his prisoner. Although he kept her under watch most of the time, there were a few moments where she was left alone. During one of these, she managed to wriggle partially free of her bonds, snatched a piece of paper, and wrote a quick message using her own blood as ink. She had hoped to try to get the message to someone who could deliver it to her allies, but Vanthus returned too quickly and she was forced to hide the unfinished note in this room. She was then taken to Gaping Maw before she had a chance to hand the note off.

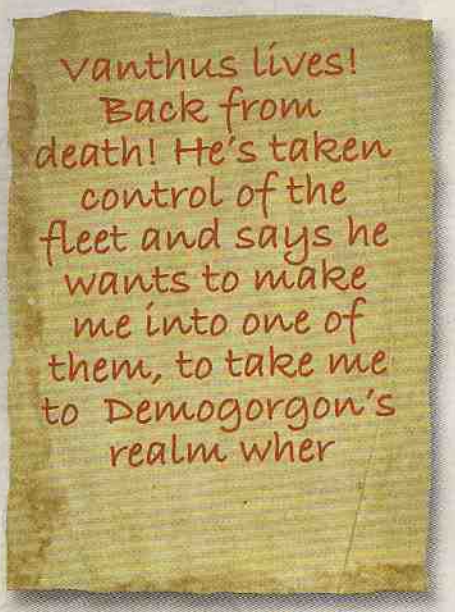
If the PCs make a DC 30 Search check of the room, her hastily scribed note will not have been in vain. The note is wedged under a floorboard in the southern corner of the room. Its contents are reproduced as Handout 2.

I5. The Glad (EL 19)

This is a hollow shell of a ship, its upper decks stripped bare and its lower decks removed to create a single large space within. This area is horrifically decorated with large hanging snake skins, several of which also appear to have humanoid features like arms or legs. The skins waft in the wet breeze, layered like curtains so that it's difficult to make out the details of the area beyond. An acrid stink fills the air here.

Creatures: The leader of the Seventh Coil, an immense yuan-ti anathema known as the Seventh, has taken up residence here. Originally intended to be a temporary home until the Seventh Coil reclaims Porphyry House or finds another suitable base of operations, the Seventh has come to enjoy this place and is considering mounting an attack on the Crimson Fleet to take the entire complex as her own.

A group of six Seventh Coil assassins stay here with their leader, honored to have been chosen for the esteemed duty of guarding her lair. They remain hidden among the curtains of the room. The Seventh herself is a huge, bloated snakelike creature with six writhing snake heads and two powerful humanoid arms. She clambers up and down the tree that supports this ship when she needs to leave her lair, an event that occurs with increasing rarity.


Vanthus lives! Back from death! He's taken control of the fleet and says he wants to make me into one of them, to take me to Demogorgon's realm wher

Handout 2

THE SEVENTH **CR 18**

Female yuan-ti anathema
CE Huge aberration
Fiend Folio 193

Init +5; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +32, Spot +36
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Yuan-ti

AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 28
hp 297 (22 HD); regeneration 5; **DR** 15/good and magic
Immune acid, poison
Resist electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 26
Fort +16, **Ref** +10, **Will** +20

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.
Melee +1 *unholy wounding falchion* +23/+18/+13 (2d8+13/18–20) and 6 bites +20 (1d8+4 plus poison)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +32
Atk Options Cleave, Combat Expertise, Power Attack, constrict 1d8+8, improved grab (bite)
Special Actions psionics
Combat Gear *serpent symbol*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

Serpent Symbol

This silver disc represents the world with a snake coiled around it, mouth gaping wide as if to consume it. This is a holy symbol used by anathema cults, symbolizing their devotion to destruction. Once per day, a *serpent symbol* can generate either a *disintegrate* (DC 20) or a *destruction* (DC 20) spell, according to the user's command. This device functions only for yuan-ti; although Use Magic Device can suffice to trick this requirement. The magic of this device functions at CL 13th. A *serpent symbol* is worth 50,000 gp.

3/day—*animal trance* (DC 18), *baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *cause fear* (DC 17), *deeper darkness*, *entangle* (DC 17), *haste*, *neutralize poison* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 19), *unholy blight* (DC 20)
1/day—*blasphemy*, *unholy aura* (DC 24)

Abilities Str 27, Dex 13, Con 29, Int 24, Wis 24, Cha 22
SQ attach grafts
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Dodge, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack
Skills Climb +33, Concentration +34, Hide +18 (+28 when using *chameleon power*), Knowledge (local) +32, Knowledge (the planes) +32, Listen +32, Move Silently +26, Search +36, Spot +36, Swim +16
Possessions combat gear, *+1 unholy wounding falchion*

All-Around Vision (Ex) An anathema has a +4 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks, and cannot be flanked.
Attach Grafts (Su) An anathema can attach grafts to creatures with shocking speed. This ability is not implemented in "Serpents of Scuttlecove" but if you want to add grafts to your campaign, consult the *Fiend Folio* for further details.
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 30, 1d4 Constitution/1d4 Constitution.
***Psionics* (Sp)** An anathema has the *alternate form*, *chameleon power*, and *detect poison psionic* abilities shared by most yuan-ti. It also has two additional powers, as detailed here:
Dissolving Touch: An anathema can exude acid from its body, dealing 7d6 acid damage to anything it touches. If it uses this power when grappling or constricting a foe, the acid deals 10d6 points of damage instead. The acid is effective only on the round when this power is used.
Mass Aversion: An anathema can create a compulsion effect in all enemies within 30 feet. Targets must make a DC 27 Will save or gain an aversion to snakes for 10 minutes. Affected creatures must stay at least 20 feet from all snake or yuan-ti, whether alive or dead. This ability functions at caster level 16th. This ability otherwise functions as a yuan-ti abomination's *aversion* ability (*Monster Manual* 265).
Regeneration (Ex) Force effects and adamantine weapons deal lethal damage to an anathema.

Seventh Coil Assassins (3): hp 107 each; see page 49.

Tactics: The Seventh is not prepared to sacrifice her life for the Crimson Fleet. If brought down to 50 hp or less, she attempts to escape into the surrounding saltmarsh while any remaining assassins sacrifice themselves, if necessary, to cover her retreat. She's hidden the wealth of the Seventh Coil's treasury away in a secret cave further inland, and it is to these caverns she hopes to retreat.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The defeat of the Crimson Fleet signals the end of this adventure. Once Cold Captain Wyther and the majority of his remaining crew and captains are slain, the chance of the Crimson Fleet recovering from the recent mutiny vanishes. The ships at sea turn on each other, deteriorating into a disorganized mass of pirates more interested, for the time being, in fighting among themselves than anything else. The safety of the seas increases dramatically as navies and merchants from the north ponder the cause of this sudden turn of events, but the PCs have doubtless discovered that this calm is an illusion at best. Demogorgon has seeded dozens of cities with madness. Discovering which cities have been seeded with *shadow pearls* and then traveling to each to discover the pearl's location and defeat the powerful minions of evil who guard them is an impossible task, yet all may not be lost if the PCs opt instead to tackle the problem at its two bickering heads deep in the Abyss.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTER

Orlath (Demon)

This horrific serpentine demon shares two humanoid torsos atop a single coiling body. Each torso waves a set of six humanoid arms, all clutching cruel scimitars. The monster's two baboonlike heads glower menacingly, their eyes beady and bright with hate.

ORLATH **CR 15**
Always CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, shapechanger)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing, x-ray vision; Listen +21, Spot +21
Aura vile gaze (30 ft.)
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 250 ft.

AC 26, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (–1 size, +7 Dex, +10 natural)
hp 184 (16 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron and good
Immune disease, mind affecting, poison
Resist fire 10; **SR** 26
Fort +17, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 30 ft.
Melee *+1 scimitar* +22/+17/+12/+7 (1d8+5/15–20 plus 1 vile) and
11 *+1 scimitars* +22 (1d8+2/15–20 plus 1 vile) and
2 bites +17 (2d6+2)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +24
Atk Options Combat Expertise
Special Actions call retriever
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)
At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 16), *discern lies* (DC 18), *dispel magic*, *fly*, *locate object*, *locate creature*, *sending*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy blight* (DC 18)
3/day—*glibness*, *move earth*, *prying eyes*, *stone shape*
1/day—*demand* (DC 21), *greater scrying* (DC 21)

Abilities Str 19, Dex 24, Con 25, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 18
SQ change shape, slashing blades, two brains
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (scimitar), Multiweapon Fighting, Vile

Martial Strike (scimitar), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Bluff +23, Concentration +26, Diplomacy +29, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +22, Knowledge (any two) +22, Listen +22, Search +22, Sense Motive +21, Spot +21

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure standard plus 12 *+1 scimitars*

Advancement 17–24 HD (Large), 25–40 HD (Huge), 41–48 HD (Gargantuan)

Call Retriever (Su) Once per day, an orlath can call a retriever to its location. This takes the orlath a full minute of concentration, but once the retriever arrives, it is under the orlath's complete control and remains until it is either killed or dismissed by the orlath (a free action). An orlath may only maintain one called retriever at a time with this ability.

Change Shape (Su) An orlath can assume the form of any Medium humanoid. Assuming a humanoid form requires a standard action, but it can assume its true form as a free action.

Slashing Blades (Ex) An orlath treats the scimitar as a light weapon for all purposes, including fighting with two weapons.

True Seeing (Su) The orlath's left head continuously uses this ability, as the spell (caster level 16th).

Two Brains (Ex) An orlath's two heads share the same personality and thoughts, but thanks to its two brains, it gains a +4 racial bonus on Will saves. An orlath cannot be flanked.

Vile Gaze (Su) Any nonevil creature within 30 feet of an orlath who meets the creature's gaze must make a DC 22 Will save or take 1d4 points of vile Charisma damage. A character drained to 0 Charisma by this gaze is transformed into a dretch under the orlath's control. Orlaths can suppress or activate the effects of this gaze as a free action. Vile ability damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell. The save DC is Charisma-based.

X-Ray Vision (Su) The orlath's right head has constant x-ray vision, as if it were wearing a *ring of x-ray vision*, except without the exhaustion effect normally associated with the ring.

Vile Feat Vile Martial Strike (scimitar) allows an orlath to do 1 additional point of vile damage each time it strikes with a scimitar. Vile damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.

Legend holds that Demogorgon killed a powerful marilith who herself had vied for the power of a demon lord. As he murdered her, several of the Prince of Demons' teeth dislodged and gestated inside the dead demon's carcass for a century, after which the ripe body split and gave birth to the first of the orlath demons.

Like the yochlols, orlath demons are not a member of a demonic race like the tanar'ri or the obyriths. They are more akin to their own race, a race shaped by and for Demogorgon himself. The orlath's ability to assume humanoid form, combined with its silver tongue and extensive knowledge, make it an excellent spy or double agent.

The orlath is devastating in combat, leading with a slashing array of scimitars and savage bites. Although weaker than the marilith, the orlath's increased number of arms make it a veritable cyclone of blood and steel in melee.

Richard writes: "Once again, I am indebted to the charmingly twisted Mr. Greer and the frighteningly talented Mr. Boyd for helping out with this adventure. Without your help, gentlemen, I would not have been able to concentrate as much on the adventure's shaved harpies, tainted thugs, and undead children. I'd like to point out to everyone what a pair of great blokes you are—cheers!

"Oh, and Logue – 'tis a dish that is best served cold... mwaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Savage Tide
Scuttlecove
City of Chaos

BY JAMES JACOBS
BY BEN WOOTTEN AND WARREN MAHY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

Sekorvia is a stinking, steaming scar of an island, the largest in the chain known as the Pirate Isles. With a skyline ruled by volcanoes and lowlands stained with festering salt marshes and dripping jungles, Sekorvia was a deadly place even before three vile and cannibalistic blasphemers seeking a refuge to pursue their studies in peace arrived. They founded a city on the southern shore of the isle, and it wasn't long before Scuttlecove grew fat and turgid. After all, even pirates need a place to rest, relax, and spend their loot.

The founders of Scuttlecove called themselves the Holy Triad, an ironic title as these blasphemers were ur-priests, divine spellcasters who stole power from the gods. The Holy Triad cultists knew that they needed a society to support their research and decadence. In only a few years, they built Scuttlecove up from nothing into a thriving, if lawless and dangerous, city. Served by a savage order of cannibalistic monks, the ur-priests used Scuttlecove to finance their debaucheries and sadistic whims. Yet in a realm where the gods are very much a reality, blasphemers such as these cannot go unpunished forever. Only six years ago, a vengeful god struck a telling blow against the Holy Triad. The ur-priests vanished from their palace during a tremendous storm that left hundreds dead. After the city recovered from the storm, its inhabitants discovered that the loss of their government may just be one of the greatest boons to ever come to Scuttlecove.

Sekorvia itself is a volcanic tropical island dominated by tangled jungles and stinking salt marshes. Barely 40 miles across at its widest point, a jagged spine of mountains (including no less than three active volcanoes) runs down its length. While a few demented hermits and feral folk dwell in lonely huts and tiny thorps, and the Crimson Fleet maintains a hidden stronghold several miles to the northwest of the city, the majority of humanoid life on the island dwells in Scuttlecove.

SCUTTLECOVE

Unlike most cities, the vast majority of Scuttlecove's inhabitants are warriors rather than commoners—it's simply too rough a place to harbor many common

folk. The city's primary exports are drugs, slaves, and stolen properties (particularly portable art objects, gems, and magical items). The city's economy is anything but stable, driven by the arrival of Crimson Fleet ships laden with loot and pirates all too eager to spend it. As a result, the majority of the city's buildings tend to be rundown and dilapidated—their owners often lack the regular income necessary to keep properties in good repair.

"Law enforcement" in Scuttlecove is handled by a sect of corrupt human monks known as the Order of Dire Hunger; these monks can be seen patrolling the streets and alleys of Scuttlecove, soliciting donations of wealth (or bits of flesh) from the citizens on a seemingly random basis to finance their depravity. A small percentage of the taxes the monks collect are returned to the city in the form of an arena, a massive public execution square, and upkeep on the docks; just enough to keep their citizens loyal.

Physically, Scuttlecove is a diseased, filthy pit of salty depression. The streets are often muddy and choked with garbage or the odd corpse yet to be claimed by a Dire Hunger monk. The buildings are almost all one-story wooden affairs, with rickety walls, sagging roofs of tarred straw or cracked wood shingles, and doorways consisting of strips of dried seaweed or cheap burlap. Those few buildings that can be construed as permanent are always the homes of powerful individuals.

Until recently, worship of the gods was the only true crime in Scuttlecove—the Holy Triad did not want divine eyes casting about their playground. Now that the ur-priests are gone, religion spreads through Scuttlecove like some new epidemic. Here and there, cultists who are little more than gangs claim abandoned structures for their doubtful deific patrons, only to be murdered by a rival cult who then claims the building as its own. Many archfiends have established cults in Scuttlecove, but the three most powerful groups today are those devoted to Graz'zt (headed by Tyralandi of the Porphyry House brothel), Mammon (headed by Kedward Bone, Scuttlecove's most powerful drug lord), and Demogorgon (patron of the Crimson Fleet and the yuan-ti of the Seventh Coil).

Scuttlecove (Large City): Nonstandard (anarchy); AL CE; 40,000 gp limit; Assets 32,900,000 gp; Population 16,450; Mixed (77% human, 5% yuan-ti, 4% half-elf, 3% halfling, 2% elf, 2% gnome, 2% half-orc, 2% tiefling, 1% dwarf, 2% other).

Idle Dangers

Obvious visitors to Scuttlecove have a chance of drawing the attention of one or more of the lowlifes and thugs that populate the place. Each day, a visitor in Scuttlecove must make a DC 20 Intimidate check to avoid attracting unwanted attention. Alternately, a DC 25 Disguise check can make a visitor appear to be a local. Failure indicates that the victim is marked by a number of Scuttlecove Thugs equal to 2 + the number of failed Intimidate checks. These thugs stalk the victim(s), striking when the advantage presents itself.

Scuttlecove Thug **CR 8**

Human rogue 4/fighter 4
CE Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +8
Languages Common

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; uncanny dodge
hp 70 (8 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk scimitar +11/+6 (1d6+4/18–20 plus poison)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +10/+5 (1d8/19–20 plus poison)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +9
Atk Options sneak attack +2d6
Combat Gear *elixir of fire breath*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of haste*, 2 doses of deathblade poison (Fort DC 20, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con), 10 doses of giant wasp poison (Fortitude DC 18, 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness (+1 hp/HD), Quick Draw, Rapid Reload (light crossbow), Stealthy, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)
Skills Climb +12, Hide +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +8
Possessions combat gear, masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork scimitar, 500 gp in assorted jewelry

Daily Life in Scuttlecove

Not every citizen of Scuttlecove is brave enough to attack the PCs; the majority of the city's thugs are cowards at heart. Eye contact is a rarity, and merchants have learned to assume that customers are probably a lot tougher and meaner than they look. Of course, the same goes for the merchants themselves; while not every merchant is capable of defending himself in a fight, merchants don't thrive in Scuttlecove without having backup. Most pay steep protection fees to one of the city's factions—attacking or robbing a merchant is a surefire way to earn the wrath of someone important.

The people of Scuttlecove are suspicious of outsiders, and are quick to charge 150% or more for goods and services if they don't recognize a face. Once visitors gain the favor of one of the city's factions, though, suspicion quickly turns to fear, and merchants cease attempting to swindle them.

SCUTTLECOVE'S FACTIONS

With the loss of a centralized government, rule in Scuttlecove has devolved to a state close to anarchy. Only several powerful factions that have risen to prominence in the last several years keep the city from constant rioting. Each of these factions has designs on ruling Scuttlecove, yet the opposition of the other factions has thus far prevented any one faction from rising to such heights.

Crimson Fleet

Of the six factions, the Crimson Fleet may be the closest to achieving its goal of controlling Scuttlecove. These pirates certainly control the majority of Scuttlecove's trade, for a large number of citizens depend on stolen cargoes of food and supplies that only the pirates can provide with ease. The one factor that keeps the Crimson Fleet from ruling

Scuttlecove is their lack of control over the city's vice trades.

Alone among the six factions, the Crimson Fleet's stronghold is located outside the city walls in a hidden cove several miles to the northwest. It is here that the Fleet's leader, a half-demon named Cold Captain Wyther, charts and plans the rapacious activity of his fleet of murderous buccaneers.

The primary presence of the Crimson Fleet in town consists of roving packs of demonic apes known as Crimson Recruiters. These bar-lgura demons serve the Crimson Fleet as press gangs. The majority of Scuttlecove's inhabitants aren't good choices for slaves, so the demons scour the city for visitors, snatching away anyone who might make a good "recruit." Crimson Recruiters travel in bands of four; the locals have learned to ignore the grunting, slavering monsters even though their proximity can bring chills to even the most jaded criminal. When they make a catch, the demons teleport back to an empty warehouse to strip the victim of his gear before inspecting him for sickness, after which they teleport to area **E4** to imprison the victim in a cell until the Fleet decides what to do with them.

Crimson Recruiters (4) **CR 8**

Bar-lgura bloodhound 3

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extrapanar, tanar'ri)

Fiendish Codex I 29, *Complete Adventurer* 29

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 21

hp 88 (9 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 16

Fort +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +15 (1d6+6) and bite +10 (1d6+3)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +15

Atk Options bring 'em back alive, nonlethal force, pounce

Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC 15), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport*, *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 19)

2/day—*disguise self* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *major image* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 22, Con 21, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 18

SQ mark, ready and waiting, swift tracker, tenacious pursuit

Feats Ability Focus (abduction), Endurance, Stealthy, Track

Skills Balance +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +24, Intimidate +6, Jump +34, Listen +12, Move Silently +20, Spot +12, Survival +13, Tumble +20

Possessions *bracers of armor +3*

Abduction (Su) A crimson recruiter can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 23 Will save to resist being transported. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Bring 'Em Back Alive (Ex) At the recruiter's option, any melee attack that would reduce a foe to –2 or fewer hit points reduces the foe to –1 hit points instead.

Mark (Ex) A crimson recruiter can mark a humanoid or monstrous humanoid foe by observing the foe for 10 minutes. The crimson recruiter gains a +3 insight bonus on Gather Information, Listen, Search, Spot, and Survival checks against the mark. A mark, once established, lasts until the crimson recruiter chooses a new mark. A mark may be chosen only once per week.

Nonlethal Force (Ex) A crimson recruiter can use a melee weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage instead without taking the –4 penalty on attack rolls.

Pounce (Ex) If a crimson recruiter charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

Ready and Waiting (Ex) A crimson recruiter can ready an action against his mark, even outside of the initiative sequence. If the mark triggers the recruiter's readied action within the next 10 minutes, the recruiter can carry out the action as if the two were engaged in combat.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)** Once per day, a crimson recruiter can attempt to summon a bar-lgura with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 6th).

Swift Tracker (Ex) A crimson recruiter can move at normal speed while following tracks.

Tenacious Pursuit (Ex) A crimson recruiter gains a +4 bonus on Constitution checks made to resist nonlethal damage from a forced march and gains a 10-foot increase to his speed when tracking his mark.

The Dealers' Consortium

Kedward Bone is one of the most powerful and dangerous inhabitants of Scuttlecove. One of the city's original inhabitants, he quickly realized that, given the direction the city was looking to grow, the drug trade in town would be the healthiest and most profitable of them all. After all, who needs to escape reality more than a landlocked, depressed pirate?

Kedward Bone lives in a stone tower in the northeastern quarter of the city. A tall, gaunt figure, his visage is shocking to behold; his face is a terrible mess of bonespurs formed long ago by a rare disease. Unlike most wizards, Kedward does not shy away from melee combat, and enjoys wielding his dire scythe, a double-bladed weapon he invented himself. His studies of the infernal realms have rewarded him with an imp familiar. Disturbingly, Kedward has taken the notion of a "familiar" quite literally; he and the imp Matylda are quite fond of each other and spend much of their free time alone together exploring each other's capacity for perversion and lust.

Kedward Bone **CR 17**

Male human fighter 1/wizard 6/diabolist 10

LE Medium humanoid

Book of Vile Darkness 56

Init +1; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, Halfling, Infernal; *tongues*

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 19

hp 70 (85 with *false life*, 17 HD)

Immune mind-affecting

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +4 *flaming burst dire scythe* +14/+9 (2d4+7/×4 plus 1d6 fire) and +4 *icy burst dire scythe* +14/+9 (2d4+5/×4 plus 1d6 ice)

Kedward Bone

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +11

Atk Options vile diabolism +3d6 4/day

Combat Gear *potion of bull's strength* (2), *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *wand of invisibility* (43 charges), *wand of haste* (11 charges), *wand of dispel magic* (27 charges)

Spells Prepared (CL 16th, touch +11, ranged touch +10)

8th—*mass charm monster* (DC 26), *mind blank* (already cast)

7th—*insanity* (DC 25), *mass hold person* (DC 25), *vision, waves of exhaustion*

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 24), *greater dispel magic, Tenser's transformation, veil* (DC 24)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 23), *dominate person* (DC 23), *feeblemind* (DC 23), *teleport, wall of force*

4th—*charm monster* (DC 22), *dimension door, lesser geas* (DC 22), *scrying, stoneskin*

3rd—*displacement*, corrupt *fireball* (2, DC 21), *greater magic weapon* (2, both already cast), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 19), *false life* (already cast), *mirror image, resist energy, scorching ray, whispering wind*

1st—*burning hands* (DC 18), *enlarge person, grease* (DC 18), *magic missile, true strike, unseen servant*

0—*light, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 25, Wis 12, Cha 5

SQ contingency, imp familiar, permanent spells

Feats Alertness (when Matylda is within arm's reach), Corrupt Spell (*fireball*), Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Evil Brand, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dire scythe), Scribe Scroll, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (dire scythe)

Skills Bluff +17, Concentration +16, Craft (alchemy) +17, Craft (weaponsmith) +11, Diplomacy +9 (+11 against evil), Intimidate +13 (+15 against evil), Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Spellcraft +23

Possessions combat gear, *+1 flaming burst/+1 icy burst dire scythe, bracers of armor +5, ring of protection +1, ring of force shield, headband of intellect +6, slippers of spider climbing*, 15,000 gp in drugs, 750 gp in diamond dust for *stoneskin*

Contingency If brought below 30 hit points, a *teleport* spell activates, allowing Kedward to flee to any one of a number of secret hideouts on nearby islands.

Permanent Spells Kedward has the following permanent spell effects: *arcane sight, darkvision, see invisibility*, and *tongues*.

Vile Diabolism (Ex) Four times per day, Kedward can infuse a spell with vile, diabolic power. He may affect any spell that affects a target or area that does not include himself. The affected spell gains the evil descriptor and deals +3d6 points of unholy damage to any good-aligned creature targeted by the spell. Half of this additional damage is also vile damage. Vile damage can only be healed within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.

Kedward's Feats Corrupt Spell is a metamagic feat that adds the evil descriptor to one damaging spell selected at the time this feat is selected—half the damage this spell deals is now unholy damage. Evil Brand grants Kedward a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks made against evil creatures. Malign Spell Focus increases the save DC of any evil spell Kedward casts by +1.

Matylda, imp familiar: hp 35; *Monster Manual* 56.

Monastery of Dire Hunger

This ominous building is the stronghold of the order of Dire Hunger, a cabal of monks that long ago stumbled upon a way to make physical their basest emotions and separate them from their minds by absorbing them into the flesh. Doing so corrupted and twisted their bodies but freed their minds to focus on the pursuit of pure knowledge. Their strongest belief is that true transcension from the

physical to the spiritual can be reached only by consuming nothing but one's own species, as all other forms of sustenance are thought to be impure and alien. The cannibalistic monks encountered the three ur-priests of the Holy Triad long ago, and their twisted philosophies struck a chord with the Triad, who immediately allied with the order. Now that the ur-priests are gone, the monks desperately try to maintain their power, and have been forced to seek allegiances with other factions.

Dire Hunger Monk **CR 9**
Corrupted human monk 7
LE Medium aberration
Book of Vile Darkness 186
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16
hp 52 (7 HD); fast healing 3; **DR** 5/magic
Immune acid, nonmagical disease
Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6 (+8 against enchantment); evasion

Spd 50 ft.
Melee unarmed strike +8 (2d6+3 plus 3 vile) or flurry of blows +7/+7 (2d6+3 plus 3 vile)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Improved Trip, Stunning Fist 7/day (DC 18)
Special Actions wholeness of body (14 hp/day)
Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance, potion of detect thoughts, elixir of truth*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6
SQ *ki* strike (magic), purity of body, slow fall 30 ft., still mind
Feats Deflect Arrows, Deformity (face), Deformity (gaunt), Improved Trip, Improved Grapple, Stunning Fist, Willing Deformity
Skills Balance +4, Escape Artist +14, Intimidate +9, Jump +28, Listen +11, Tumble +12
Possessions combat gear, *ring of protection +1, ring of jumping*

Vile Feats Willing Deformity grants a +2 deformity bonus on Intimidate checks. Deformity (face) grants the monk a +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks and a +2 deformity bonus on Diplomacy checks with evil creatures. Deformity (gaunt) grants a +2 deformity bonus to Dexterity, a –2 penalty to Constitution, and a +2 circumstance bonus on Escape Artist and Intimidate checks.

Porphyry House

A rose blooming in a graveyard, the beauty of Porphyry House has an undeniably sinister taint. The majestic building rises proud from the surrounding hovels and sagging shops in Scuttlecove's western quarter, and despite a great scandal several years ago, the building remains the city's most successful and powerful brothel.

Once run by yuan-ti cultists of Demogorgon allied with the Seventh Coil, a group of adventurers managed to defeat the cult five years ago and prevented the spread of a dangerous new drug called Demon's Breath. These heroes managed to accomplish this goal only with the aid of a mysterious and beautiful creature named Tyralandi, a half-fiend nymph and devotee of the demon lord Graz'zt who had been sent to destroy the rival cult.

After the yuan-ti were defeated, Tyralandi took up the reigns of the brothel. She disposed of the polymorphed monsters the yuan-ti had previously used as staff and set about hiring the most talented and exotic men and women she could find to populate her house.

Over the past five years, Tyralandi has used her resources and charms to learn secrets and sinister things that should remain hidden. She uses the bordello as her eyes and ears within the city, and few are aware of her true intention—to turn Scuttlecove into a personal paradise. She finds the Crimson Fleet to be crude and slovenly, and desires a reduction in their presence in the city. One of her favorite secrets is her deep knowledge of the Protectorate—she knows enough about this faction that a whisper in the right ear would bring the faction down. For now, however, she views the faction as a possible resource in gaining further control of Scuttlecove.

Tyralandi, Porphyry Mistress **CR 18**
Female half-fiend nymph ranger 1/thrall of Graz'zt 10
CE Medium outsider (augmented fey, native)
Monster Manual 148 & 197; *Book of Vile Darkness* 69
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +17
Aura blinding beauty (30 feet, DC 24)
Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Sylvan

AC 34, touch 26, flat-footed 29
hp 179 (17 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron and magic
Immune fear, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27
Fort +25, **Ref** +27, **Will** +30

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average), swim 20 ft.
Melee +3 *keen rapier* +18/+13 (1d6+4/15–20) and
claw +10 (1d6) and
bite +10 (1d4)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10
Atk Options smite good 1/day (+17 damage), spell betrayal +5d6, spellstrike +2d6
Special Actions stunning glance (30 feet, DC 24), *summon demon*
Combat Gear *barkskin +5 tattoo* (left hand), *cure moderate wounds tattoo* (face), *lesser restoration tattoo* (right hand), *resist energy tattoo* (shoulder), *tree shape* (waist), scroll of *greater teleport*, scroll of *heal*, scroll of *simulacrum* (2), *wand of magic missile* (CL 9th, 30 charges)
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 13th; +10 touch, +15 ranged touch)
7th—*heal, greater scrying* (DC 23)
6th—*antilife shell, greater dispel magic, fire seeds* (DC 22)
5th—*call lightning storm* (DC 22), violated *flame strike* (DC 21), *insect plague* (DC 22), *wall of thorns*
4th—violated *call lightning* (DC 20), *cure serious wounds, flame strike* (DC 21), *ice storm, spike stones*
3rd—*call lightning* (DC 20), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *greater magic fang* (2), *spike growth* (DC 20)
2nd—*bull's strength, flame blade, flaming sphere* (DC 19), *heat metal* (DC 19), violated *produce flame, soften earth and stone, wood shape* (DC 19)
1st—*charm animal* (DC 18), *cure light wounds* (3), *entangle, obscuring mist, produce flame*
0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, flare* (DC 17), *guidance, mending, read magic*;
Thrall of Graz'zt Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
At will—*charm person* (DC 22)
Half-Fiend Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th)

3/day—*darkness*, *poison* (DC 25), *unholy aura* (DC 25)
1/day—*blasphemy*, *contagion* (DC 25), *desecrate*, *horrid wilting* (DC 29), *summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 25)

Nymph Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)
1/day—*dimension door*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 22, Con 24, Int 20, Wis 24, Cha 32

SQ dark charisma, unearthly grace, wild empathy +17 (+20 against evil creatures)

Feats Abyss-Bound Soul (Graz'zt), Evil Brand, Tattoo Magic, Thrall to Demon (Graz'zt), Track, Violate Spell, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +31 (+34 against evil), Concentration +26, Craft (tattooing) +15, Diplomacy +34 (+39 against evil), Disguise +11 (+13 acting), Escape Artist +13, Heal +16, Hide +14, Intimidate +13 (+15 against evil), Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (religion) +15, Move Silently +14, Perform (dance) +31 (+34 against evil), Sense Motive +26, Spot +17, Use Magic Device +31

Possessions combat gear, *+2 glamered mithral breastplate*, *+3 keen rapier*, *amulet of health +6* (in the form of an unholy symbol of Graz'zt), *ring of Wisdom +4* (as *periapt of Wisdom +4*), *bracers of red rapture*, 18,000 in jewelry

Dark Charisma (Ex) Tyralandi gains a +3 enhancement bonus on wild empathy, Diplomacy, Bluff, Gather Information, Handle Animal, and Perform checks when dealing with evil creatures.

Demonic Gift Tyralandi used a scroll of *extract gift* (*Fiendish Codex I*) to gain a permanent +5 enhancement bonus to her Charisma. This effect functions at caster level 20th, and cannot be dispelled by a lower-caster-level effect.

Spell Betrayal (Su) When casting a damage-dealing spell on a flat-footed target, Tyralandi inflicts +5d6 points of damage.

Spellstrike (Su) If Tyralandi casts a damaging spell on a target she threatens in melee, she adds +2d6 points of damage to the damage dealt.

***Summon Demon* (Sp)** Tyralandi can summon one demon of 5 HD or less and one demon of 10 HD or less each day. This functions as a *summon monster* spell (CL 15th).

Tattoo Magic Tyralandi can craft magical tattoos using this feat (*Races of Faerûn*). A magic tattoo functions as a potion; to activate one, Tyralandi must take a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity to touch the tattoo with either hand (the hand does not need to be empty). A magic tattoo occupies a space on her body; she can not activate a tattoo if she wears a magic item in the same location.

Vile Feats Several of Tyralandi's feats are vile feats from the *Book of Vile Darkness* or *Fiendish Codex I*. Abyss-Bound Soul grants her a +2 bonus on saving throws against spells with the good descriptor and makes her immune to fear effects. Evil Brand grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks made against evil creatures. Thrall to Demon allows her to gain a +1 luck bonus once per day on any one attack roll, saving throw, ability check, skill check, or level check. Violate Spell allows Tyralandi to prepare a spell (at one level higher than the spell's actual level) and infuse it with vile energy—a violated spell has the evil descriptor and half the damage the spell inflicts is also vile damage.

The Protectorate

Alone among the six factions vying for control in Scuttlecove, the Protectorate is not a den of cruelty and hatred. Indeed, its members are as close as one might get to kind-hearted and helpful in this place. As a result, the Protectorate is also the smallest and least powerful of the six factions. Forced to live double lives, members of this hidden faction pose as pirates, drug dealers, prostitutes, merchants, or merely vagrants in Scuttlecove by day, and by night aid their kin in hidden safehouses. The goals of the Protectorate are simple—it seeks to aid those stranded in Scuttlecove, be it to escape or to accomplish any goals they may have in the city.

The Seventh Coil

The Seventh Coil is perhaps tied with the Crimson Fleet in the race for power and resources. This faction is comprised entirely of yuan-ti slavers who have preyed upon the people of Scuttlecove and the surrounding isles for years. These creatures are led by an immense monster, a six-headed yuan-ti anathema referred to as the Seventh, who affectionately refers to her followers as her "seventh head," hence the name of her organization. The Seventh Coil was actually based on another island in the Pirate Isles until five years ago, when the sudden defeat of the Porphyry House yuan-ti, coinciding with the loss of its own fortress to a volcanic eruption, left the Coil with no home and no points of contact in Scuttlecove. As distasteful as it was to the Seventh, she approached the pirates of the Crimson Fleet with an offer of allegiance. She would "donate" several of her yuan-ti slavers to aid in gathering prisoners and assist the fleet in other ways if they would allow her to relocate to Sekorvia. Cold Captain Wyther agreed, in part because the two groups both venerated the same demonic lord, and in part because he realized that he would need all the help he could get if he was to serve Demogorgon's latest needs.

ENCOUNTERS IN SCUTTLECOVE

Only the more important locations in Scuttlecove are covered here, and even then, they are presented with minimal details—just enough to spur the imagination and guide future development if the PCs seek to investigate some place not detailed further in the accompanying adventure. DMs seeking more information on Scuttlecove should consult "Porphyry House Horror" in *Dungeon* #95.

Scuttlecove Harbor

The waters of the cove itself are treacherous and filled with numerous jagged reefs. In fact, the city earned its name due to the large number of scuttled ships that still rot in the cove. These ships have been left to provide cover against any large invasion; a single ship can pass through the maze of wrecks and reefs with relative ease if they have the proper charts, but a large fleet would never make it through in time to pose a threat to the city.

Anyone attempting to navigate the cove without accurate charts must make a DC 28 Profession (sailor) check

to make it safely through this maze. Possession of accurate charts of the cove grant a +10 circumstance bonus to this check. Once the piers are reached, a visitor can moor at any open spot (there are generally plenty to choose from) with little problem as long as they fly the flag of the Crimson Fleet (a red flag with a black, horned skull before two crossed scimitars).

Scuttlecove's boardwalk is where the majority of its mercantile transactions take place. The region is a tangled, chaotic mess of tents and booths, where merchants of all types hawk their wares. The boardwalk is the place to go if you're looking for something that can't be bought in more civilized areas. Slaves, stolen merchandise and magic, poisons, and rare magical components can all be found here, subject to Scuttlecove's 40,000 gp ceiling.

The Noyaro River

The Noyaro River originally bordered the eastern side of the city—the dwellings on the east shore consist of a tangled mess of temporary buildings made of wood, straw, mud, and even excrement or garbage. The Noyaro reaches a depth of 30 feet in places, and as such provides an excellent natural barrier to separate the lowest of the low from the rest of the city. The vagabonds, rogues, and hopeless who live here are mostly harmless, and spend much of their time hiding in their crude homes. This is where pirates go to die when they can't afford to be killed in a barroom brawl.

1. Scuttlecove Palace

This enormous walled complex is a mystery to the citizens of Scuttlecove. Once the home of the ur-priests of the Holy Triad, the buildings are now abandoned by the living. Those few attempts by locals hoping to claim the palace or its treasures as their own have ended in either their complete disappearance or frantic attempts to escape as the intruders are torn apart by horrific monsters and wailing spirits. After a few months, the locals learned to leave these cursed ruins well-enough alone.

2. Parts Is Parts

This grim shop is built entirely out of bones. Most of them come from monsters and large beasts, but the façade is fashioned from humanoid skulls and ribcages. This squat, two-story structure is owned by an enterprising necromancer by the name of **Rhemus Caldakar** (CE gnome male necromancer 10), a one-time adventuring companion of Kedward Bone. The two remain fairly close friends, although Rhemus is growing increasingly jealous of Kedward's successful business and his relationship with his familiar. Rhemus has lusted after Matylda for years, but is too afraid of Kedward to act on his obsession yet.

3. Skindancer Academy

This square tower of ivory houses an order of bards who call themselves Skindancers, after an exotic form of dancing coupled with stylistic torture of willing guests with needles and knives. The academy is run by an attractive halfling woman whose body is an intricate network of fine scars—this is **Peryoil Whistlecut** (CE female halfling bard 11) and although she may seem friendly, her taste in pleasure is anything but.

4. Kedward Bone's Tower

Kedward Bone's tower is made of stone, and is comprised of five stories of well-warded, well-protected floors. The first floor consists of one large room used to entertain guests and interview future business partners. It is here that Kedward Bone arranges to meet with visitors.

5. The Tall House

This two-story house towers over the shacks and shanties that are so common on the east bank of the Noyaro. Scuttlecove's most reprehensible slumlord, an obese man named **Vurch Udderwort** (NE male human rogue 5), dwells on the upper floor of this building. He often calls upon the small army of thugs who dwell on the ground floor of this building to collect on rent due him from the slum's desperate tenants.

Bracers of Red Rapture

A gift to Tyralandi from Graz'zt for defeating the previous owners of Porphyry House, these bracers of mithral and darkwood seem innocent enough until the inside surface is examined. This surface is studded with long spikes and blades—putting the bracers on inflicts intense pain, stunning the wearer for 1d4 rounds. The bracers heighten the sensations of pain and pleasure, drawing upon this energy to sustain the victim's life when pain is inflicted upon him. The victim gains a +4 bonus on all saving throws against pain-related effects, and is immune to exhaustion and fatigue. Further, whenever the wearer suffers damage from a single attack of an amount that equals or exceeds his Hit Dice, he gains a +2 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls, skill checks, and saving throws until the end of his actions in the following round. If the wearer's hit points drop to a point lower than his number of Hit Dice, he becomes *hasted* for as long as he remains this damaged (for up to 15 rounds per day). If reduced to negative hit points, the bracers immediately cure the wearer of 3d8+5 points of damage but then become inert for 24 hours. This healing occurs after the damage is suffered, and if the wearer is reduced to –10 hit points or lower, death still occurs and the healing is wasted. Finally, the bracers give the wearer the ability to cast *symbol of pain* three times a day, although the symbol must be inscribed in flesh (this takes a full-round action and inflicts 1d4 points of damage on the person).

Minor Artifact; Strong Necromancy (evil); CL 15th; Weight 1 lb.

6. Scuttlecove Orphanage

The front of this squat stone building is an open-air patio used as an auction block twice monthly to sell off excess children as slaves. The Scuttlecove Orphanage functions as a workhouse as well, a place where children harvested from loads of prisoners brought in by pirates or from the city itself toil under

the merciless command of a one-eyed taskmaster named **Sornk Ghesterwhal** (CE male human expert 3/rogue 3).

7. The Minting House

Once the base of operations of a group of thieves who specialized in coin scraping and counterfeiting, this area has become a Seventh Coil stronghold. It is detailed in full in "Serpents of Scuttlecove."

8. The Deacon's Aria

This building houses a large theater that offers several shows in the grand guignol style every week. Most of the shows offered here are little more than public torture displays, but the recent addition of a mysterious elven woman who performs a striptease ending in the removal of her own skin has drawn nightly crowds. The matron of the playhouse, a disturbingly pleasant woman named **Abetheny Rovenka** (NE female human aristocrat 12) is always on the lookout for new talent.

9. The Rattlebox

This popular tavern and public hall features all manner of dangerous games, including a pit for animal fights, a game of chance involving six metal boxes with hand-sized holes in the side (one of which contains hungry rot grubs), and high-stakes games of cards or dice. The proprietor is a violent dwarf named **Stonch Figwater** (CE male dwarf fighter 8) who proudly displays the scalped beards of those caught trying to cheat in his establishment.

10. The Birdcage

The Sisters of Lamentation are a vile collection of shaved harpies who are excellent torturers and information brokers. This building serves them as a base of operations, where they have recently been establishing stronger ties with the Crimson Fleet. This area is detailed in full in "Serpents of Scuttlecove."

11. Scuttlecove Arena

One of the few structures in Scuttlecove constructed by the Holy Triad, this modest open-air arena is a popular diversion for the people of the city. The arena is staffed by several Dire Hunger monks who are in charge of arranging weekly battles between captured monsters from elsewhere on the island and donated prisoners from pirate ships.

12. Plaza of Hanging Ruin

This terrifying structure consists of metal and wood beams arranged in a series of concentric squares. The beams are suspended 20 feet off the ground by tall stone pillars, and are festooned with coils of spiked chains. Numerous spiked manacles dangle from these beams, along with thousands of tiny chains that end in hooks, clamps, and long, thin barbed rods.

When the Holy Triad ran Scuttlecove, this plaza was a great source of income. For the low price of 100 gp, any prisoner could be mounted here for public mockery and eventual execution. Today, the Plaza has become more of a first-come, first-served public service. No one's around to enforce the payments, so anyone who can find some open space on the plaza can mount their victims here so they die slowly and painfully.

13. The Mausoleum

The dead of Scuttlecove are brought to this tall building by the monks of Dire Hunger. This building, known only as the Mausoleum, is where the monks prepare the dead for their feasts. Most of the bodies are found to be unworthy and are tossed into a deep pit in the center of the structure.

14. Porphyry House

Porphyry House is Scuttlecove's most successful brothel, and without a doubt the cleanest and most majestic building within the city walls. The structure is made of a dark purple volcanic rock called porphyry, and opens for business at sunset. At this time, the place quickly becomes crowded—entertainment here isn't cheap, but it is popular. The steep prices ensure that vagabonds and street trash stay out.

The building's façade is decorated with statues and bas-reliefs that depict handsome men and beautiful women striking lewd poses or engaged in various carnal activities. Within, the walls are decorated with red or blue tapestries or risqué paintings. Floors are deep, soft carpets over padding, and the air is pleasantly warm and thick with exotic smells. The ground floor of the building consists of guest rooms, feast halls, storerooms, and servants' quarters. The upper floor contains a large forum-like audience hall, additional rooms outfitted for handing special requests or important guests, a treasury, and personal chambers for the house's three most important members; somewhat dim-witted **Agarik** (CN male human fighter 13; the brothel's head of security), the subtly evil and manipulative **Cul** (NE female halfling bard 12; the brothel's madame), and the owner of Porphyry House, Tyralandi.

Chambers below Porphyry House once served as a hidden temple to Demogorgon. Tyralandi has since destroyed the contents of these rooms and converted them over to her own private and hedonistic retreat, a personal shrine to her demonic patron, Graz'zt.

15. The Rusty Shunt

The Rusty Shunt is a well-built, two-story wooden building, and perhaps the safest place to rest and relax in Scuttlecove. This inn is owned and run by a portly man named **Lars Landicaster** (CG human male ranger 8), a retired bounty hunter who is wanted in more nations than he can remember for various crimes short of murder. Lars has seen much in Scuttlecove, enough that he has cast aside his own cruelties. He remains in Scuttlecove out of a sense of duty to provide somewhere safe for those unfortunate enough to be born here. Lars has a strict code against harming paying customers. He asks no questions if the coins are good, and his guards are quite loyal. His prices are triple standard, but may be well worth it for a safe place to rest.

Lars' greatest secret is a small shrine dedicated to the Church of the Whirling Fury. This tiny room is located in a small complex of secret chambers in his

basement, and constitutes the second Protectorate safehouse. Lars himself isn't a member of the Protectorate, and has refused the many invitations to join. He argues that, if he's discovered, the less he knows about the faction, the better.

16. Monastery of Dire Hunger

This grim structure is built of basalt and reinforced with bands of iron. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that its architecture purposefully mocks temples devoted to St. Cuthbert. Numerous narrow windows stud the exterior walls of this one-story complex and its three-story central tower, but there is only one pair of doors. Located on the southern approach, these massive iron portals are kept locked (Open Lock DC 40) at all times.

17. Eralakni's Emporium

This large structure of green stone is owned and run by an industrious half-orc named **Eralanki** (CN female half-orc expert 8). The building is a sort of miniature marketplace, with private booths that can be rented out to merchants for the high price of 20 gp a day. This fee ensures that those merchants who set up shop here are only the cream of the crop. Eralanki herself is one of the few non-evil citizens of Scuttlecove; she has no real interest in the philosophy of good and evil, and only wants to make money. She allows the Protectorate to maintain a safehouse of sorts in the Emporium's basement, although she's considering leaking the location of the safehouse to the Dire Hunger monks as the Protectorate is late on their latest payment for her secrecy.

18. Red Foam Whaling

Once used by a band of pirates who specialized in stealing the hauls of whaling ships, this whaling factory has been deserted for years. Until recently, it served as a Protectorate safehouse, but the yuan-ti blackguard known as the Leech murdered the Protectorate members who dwelt here. This area is detailed in full in "Serpents of Scuttlecove."

19. The Violated Ogre

The Violated Ogre is a tavern/inn that caters mostly to visiting adventurers. Naturally, the clientele of the Violated Ogre are a foul and surly lot. The place gets its name from its most popular form of entertainment, which consists of a wretched ogre mage on display on a small stage in the center of the main room. The ogre mage is stitched by thick coils of rusty wire to an iron framework of spiked bars over a large bloodstained grill in the floor. Visitors to the tavern are welcome to do what they will to the imprisoned ogre mage, either with their own equipment or using the torture instruments thoughtfully provided on a nearby tray. The ogre mage's regeneration keeps him from dying, but his mind has long since been destroyed by a *robe of powerlessness*. The ogre mage has been an attraction here for nearly ten years and has long since been driven hopelessly insane by the ordeal. The creature is now a raving masochist that takes disturbing pleasure in the ministrations of the tavern's drunken amateur surgeons.

The tavern is owned and run by a retired adventurer by the name of **Borsch Dipraft** (NE human male fighter 7), who killed the previous proprietor over a gambling debt.

20. House of the Black Rider

This grim edifice looks as if it could collapse in on itself at any moment, yet the structure is sound. The building has become a shrine to the god of disease, Incabulos, and serves as a refuge for lepers and other desperate souls. Most of the surrounding buildings are sickhouses—the southern section of the slums is generally avoided by the rest of Scuttlecove's citizens, which is how the leader of this shrine, a stooped old man in long black robes who is known to the faithful only as **Papa Crab** (NE human male cleric 6), prefers it.

THE PERFECT PANTHEON

BREWING UP THE RIGHT GODS

BY WOLFGANG BAUR
BY KYLE HUNTER

Dungeon masters use homebrew campaigns for lots of reasons: more control over the NPC roster, no chance that some setting lawyer will harass you about details in a sourcebook you haven't read, and a chance to set everything up the way you've always imagined it. That often includes a new or adapted pantheon, fine-tuned to suit your cosmology or to make it easier to create certain types of clerics as heroes and villains. I personally think designing new and better pantheons is great fun, and that everyone should try it once or twice. Playing god with the gods, as it were.

But there are also hidden dangers that can make the process a chore rather than quick fun for the players whose characters will need to know these gods and their quirks. Consider the following suggestions for smarter pantheon design.

Start Small

Most pantheons in the real world have at least a dozen major gods and many more minor ones: think of the Norse, the Egyptians, or the Greeks. Fantasy pantheons aren't any smaller; the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting offers more than 50 gods. This might lead you to create a large and complex grouping as well, but I'd say that's a mistake.

The important thing for a pantheon designer is not generating many gods, but choosing the five or six most important gods and sticking to them. I'd recommend starting by considering the five or six portfolios that match your own personal preferences or that match your world's themes and obstacles. For me, a

good starting list might be a harvest god, a sun god, a goddess of love, a god of war, a god of fire and smiths, and a goddess of death. That covers the biggest spiritual and worldly needs, and leaves room for lesser gods as well.

You should give your pantheon lots of room to grow. Just because five or seven gods are the core of the pantheon doesn't mean that there aren't others that are important: the moon goddess, the gods of the hunt or the ocean, and the god of knowledge and magic are all not on my core list. Well, actually, some of them are, but it's not obvious. That's because an interesting pantheon gets a lot more work out of its gods than a one-for-one mapping between domains and gods.

Double and Triple Up

You want gods to be more than one-dimensional, so a designer's first instinct might be to lump related domains together. For instance, the god of the sun might grant access to the Sun, Good, and Law domains. This works, but it's boring and obvious. Interesting gods meet some of the definitions everyone expects, and confound those expectations in other ways. The example I often like to use is Apollo, the Greek god of the sun, poetry, and music, though many other gods have similarly long lists of attributes.

So, let's double up that list. Actually, let's share out all 22 core domains among the major gods, plus two extra domains (Craft and Charm, from *Player's Guide to Faerûn*) as seen in the table below.

You'll notice some choices are straightforward (Sun domain for the Sun god), and some are just the opposite (Evil for the Sun god?). But the setting I'm planning for is an inland desert kingdom threatened by elven nomads and allied with dwarves. The sun is death in the desert; the desert harvest is unreliable and powerful. Your setting may have a huge influence on what divine forces are considered welcome and which are considered hostile.

Also, notice that no god gets more than one of the alignment domains. That helps us prevent "divine typecasting" and gives the gods (and more importantly, their followers) some leeway. Followers of the Death Goddess can include LG, LE, and LN branches of the faith. While that may seem contradictory, in fact it follows the logic of real-world religions, where sacred books and prophecies have multiple, often contradictory interpretations. In a fantasy universe, clerics can ask their gods which version of a divine teaching is the "right" one—but there's no reason to believe that fantasy gods will be any more consistent. Or rather, they might be consistently lawful, but might not care deeply about good versus evil.

Consider the Servants: the Minor Gods

The ultimate purpose of any pantheon is to inspire interesting characters, both villains and heroes. To that end, you need to both plan for the obvious character, class, and racial choices and leave enough room for expansion.

You may also want to offer up at least three or four minor gods along with your core pantheon, just to expand the field slightly. You want no more than 10 defined deities to start with—more deities will suggest themselves in the course of any campaign, but it's important to keep options limited early. Another way to subtly encourage characters to think of your major gods first is to give minor gods just three domains, and make at least one of those non-core.

I recommend that you pick patron gods for paladins, druids, rangers, and possibly for monks. In my case, druids and rangers follow the harvest goddess or the goddess of love. Monks follow the knowledge path of the Smith, the Death Goddess in her rebirth aspect, or perhaps the merciful aspect of the goddess of Love. Each of those choices opens up some character choices.

Paladins illustrate the use of single-alignment gods in a pantheon: the Good domain belongs to the god of Fire and Smiths, and the Law domain to the Death Goddess. As a consequence, paladins follow the Death Goddess or the Fire and Smiths God for reasons of alignment, or the War God for thematic reasons.

You can see how striving to imitate these gods might make the paladins grim, humorless, yet brutally efficient characters. For experienced players, a paladin of a goddess of death is not just more original than a paladin of the Sun God; it's a bigger challenge to play when you don't have a stereotype to work with. The paladin also offers some more traditional types for beginning players: a paladin of the War god is a mighty warrior for justice, and a dwarven smith-paladin isn't a huge rolepaying stretch.

Creating Minor and National Gods

Let's say I want to introduce some minor gods, such as a Moon Goddess, the God of Justice, and the Gear Goddess, because players requested them. In these cases, I can either introduce new domains this way or give the minor gods a smaller portfolio of domains (say no more than three). Their allegiances might relate to the greater gods as well: the Moon Goddess could well be the younger sister of the Death Goddess, and the estranged wife of the Sun, giving her the Darkness domain (from *Player's Guide to Faerûn*), the Moon domain (also from the *Player's Guide to Faerûn*), and the Good or Protection domain. You see how it goes; you create the minor gods when you need them, and they're useful to the campaign because a player character needs such a patron. Don't spend time on a god that doesn't connect with the heroes.

The more interesting pantheons have gods with many interests, some related to divine power, others related to serving as patrons of a race, cause, or nation. The minor gods of the pantheon described here include the goddess of stars and

Domains of Core Gods

Harvest Goddess	Animal, Chaos, Earth, Plant
Sun God	Air, Evil, Sun, Trickery
Love and Mercy Goddess	Charm, Healing, Protection, Water
God of Fire and Smiths	Craft, Fire, Good, Knowledge
War God	Destruction, Luck, Strength, War
Death Goddess	Death, Law, Magic, Travel

magic, the goddess of the moon, the god of heralds, bards, and merchants, and the weather and ocean god. But just as important are the dwarven All-Father, the elven god of archery, and the orcish aspect of the War God.

These are all versions of existing gods: the dwarven All-Father is also the god of fire and smiths. The elven god of archery is also the Goddess of Love among humans, and the orcish War God is not very different from the human one (though he always sides with the tribes, naturally). How is it possible for one god to appear in so many forms and support opposite sides in a war? They're gods. They don't have to behave in ways mortals understand. And frankly, why should a war god care who is fighting? As long as the goal is more war, he supports both sides to keep them going.

Schisms and Rivalries

From a plot and story perspective, religion is a terrific source of tension, conflict, and violence in a campaign. Even religions of peace may have followers willing to kill to attain their ends. And that's just monotheism—imagine the story potential of a whole pantheon of mutually antagonistic gods.

You should keep these schisms and rivalries simple, so your players can keep track. I'd recommend that each of the major gods have one nemesis and one split in the faith. This split might be between alignments, races, or matters of religious doctrine.

Rival Gods: Notice that the divine rivalries immediately provide a couple of storylines; a paladin of the goddess of Death might oppose the chaotically-inclined druids of the Harvest Goddess (perhaps better known as the Green Goddess). The Sun God hates his ex-wife, but she always escapes him and at times even eclipses his light. The War God is ascendant over the Goddess of Love and Mercy, who might have only a few followers, most of whom are martyred sooner rather than later. The Fire and Smith God opposes the works of the Sun God, and the two sects clearly don't get along; it's a major rivalry. The Fire and Smith God is very likely an ally (perhaps the new husband) of the Moon Goddess. Creating backstory is just a matter of setting relationship in motion and recognizing the conflicts that always come up between powerful personalities.

Divine Rivalries and Split Churches

Deity	Nemesis	Split
Death Goddess	Harvest Goddess	LG paladins vs. LE seekers of magic
Fire and Smith God	Sun God	LG dwarves vs. NG humans
Harvest Goddess	Death Goddess	CG blessed vs. CN druids
Love Goddess	War God	CG elven martriarchs vs. LN human monks
Sun God	Moon Goddess	LE hidden sun cult vs. CE heretical blind mystics
War God	Goddess of Love	LN soldier-priests vs. LN noble priests

And that's about it. Avoid the urge to overcomplicate the pantheon at the start. If you can't explain it in a paragraph, it's too much, especially for new players. Never expect players to read more than a single page of background on your pantheon: they want a bulleted list, not an epic.

Pantheon and Setting

This brings us the tricky question of demi-human gods and national patrons. I'm against the former and for the latter. While gods such as Moradin offer a comfortable default choice to a dwarven character, there's no need to duplicate an entire pantheon. Why shouldn't all the intelligent races recognize the same gods, though perhaps with different faces?

That's exactly what the split for the Fire and Smith god is about in the second table; the human followers may worship a version of the god something like Hephaestus or Weyland, a smith and wonder-worker, a wise god of fire and wit. The dwarven god has the same or a similar name, but his statues are of a Dwarven All-Father. They see the human version of the god as an abomination and a blasphemy, importuning the All-Father for the blessings that rightfully belong to the dwarves.

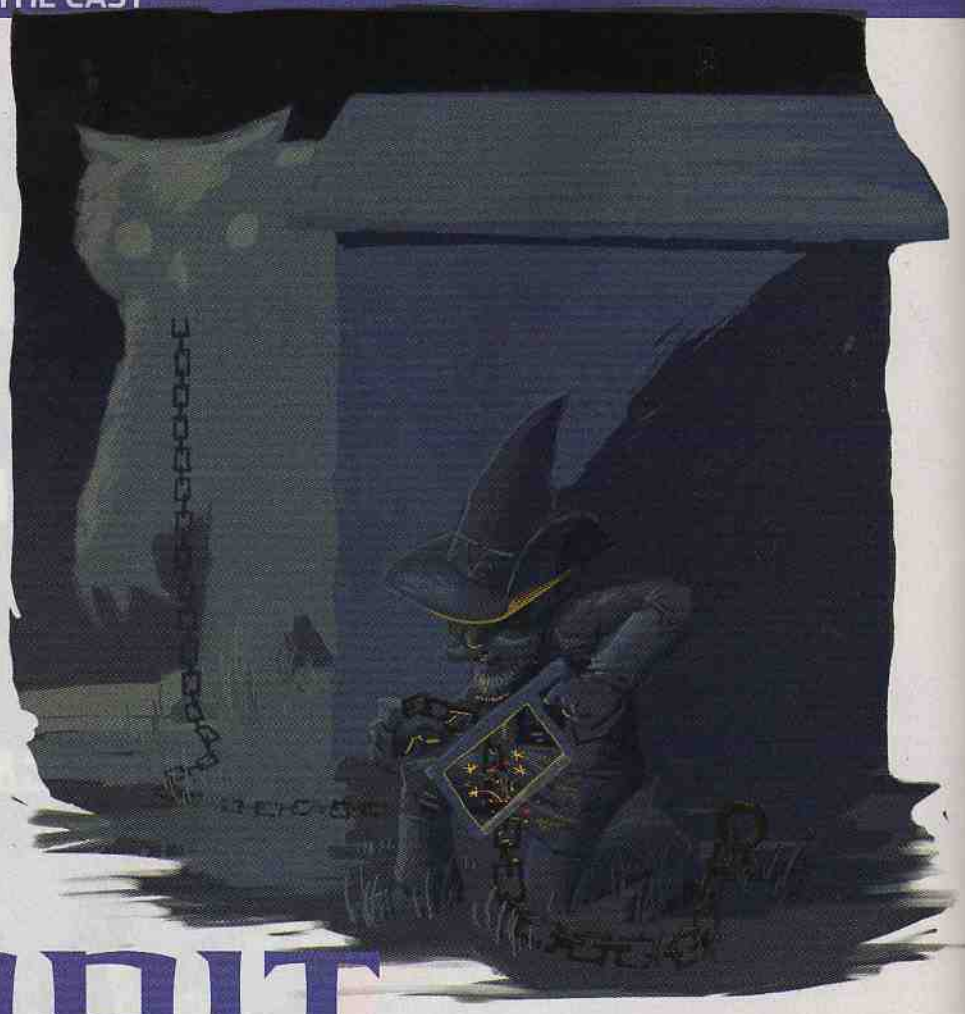
In this case, giving the same god to everyone creates another flashpoint for adventure: perhaps the humans and the dwarves are quarreling over the proper ownership of a sacred shrine, and the whole thing could start an ugly war unless the PCs find a way to make peace between the two sides by uniting them against the Sun worshippers who are really pulling the strings. Perhaps the dwarven cleric just grumbles every time someone "mispronounces" the dwarven name for his god. Either way, your campaign just got richer.

National patrons are another story. They should be associated with a major temple of the nation, with a particular king or bloodline, and with a certain branch of the faith. This gives you room to do certain things at the intersections of religion and politics, such as crusades, inquisitions, and witch-hunts. If you want to go all out, theocracy and the imposition of mandatory worship or attendance might be interesting.

Conclusion

Use a pantheon's prominence to define the important themes and powers of your setting by creating a small set of central gods, then adding lesser gods later to suit player needs. Use religion's ability to divide people to generate conflict and set your kingdoms at each other's throats. When you hear a player call out his patron god's name before rolling the dice, you'll know your pantheon is doing its job: stirring up adventure.

Wolfgang Baur is a renowned adventure designer who shares his writing secrets with patrons at wolfgangbaur.com. He is the author of "Expedition to the Demonweb Pits" and "Castle Shadowcrag," among many others.



BANDIT GANGS

BY RUSSELL BROWN
BY KYLE HUNTER

Gangs of bandits are a normal travel hazard in areas where the rule of law is weak. But are all bandits just common thieves, social outcasts, and unemployed soldiers? The following are three alternative bandit gangs you can drop in as your next wilderness encounter.

Rightful Heir

Rodek Morannon is the eldest son of the late, beloved lord of a nearby kingdom. Although Rodek is the rightful heir, his corrupt younger brother Verek conspired with the regent to discredit him and claim the succession for himself. Marked as a traitor, Rodek took up his father's sword and led his loyal men into the wilderness, where they have taken up thievery, hoping to get enough money to hire a mercenary force to overthrow his brother.

Torn by the necessity of preying on innocents, Rodek has tried to ease his guilt by instructing his followers to take only coins minted in his home kingdom and to let the poorest travelers pass. His men also give each traveler a written promissory note for their lost coins, payable when Rodek returns to power.

Rodek Morannon **CR 6**
Male human fighter 5/rogue 1
NG Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Spot +2, Listen +3
Language Common

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Dodge, Mobility
hp 47 (6 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft.

Melee *+1 bastard sword* +10 (1d10+4/19–20) or sap +8 (1d6+3 nonlethal)
Ranged *+1 shortbow* +7 (1d6+1)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +8
Atk Options Spring Attack, sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ trapfinding
Feats Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Leadership, Mobility, Mounted Combat, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)
Skills Climb +4, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +7, Jump +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Ride +7, Spot +2, Swim +3
Possessions combat gear, masterwork chain shirt, masterwork light steel shield, *+1 bastard sword*, *+1 shortbow* with 20 arrows, sap

Light Warhorse: hp 21; *Monster Manual* 274

Cursed of Olidammara

From the hills just beyond civilization, the fierce but short-lived bandit kingdom of Olbahar once sent its thieves and raiders to pillage nearby settlements. In response, armies from several realms banded together to annihilate Olbahar, and the only remaining sign of its existence is the ruined temple of Olidammara.

When the priests of Olbahar realized destruction was upon them, they begged Olidammara to bring revenge, and their prayers were soon answered. Any creature removing coins or valuables from the temple ruins becomes cursed as if subject to a *geas* cast by a 14th-level sorcerer. The victim is compelled to return everything taken, or an equivalent value in coins, gems, and jewelry. The victim must then personally contribute 1 gp to the temple coffers every day or suffer hideous pain. However, only ten creatures can be cursed in this way at one time. When the eleventh creature is cursed, it frees the creature that has been cursed the longest.

The current band of thieves has no definite leader, though they all have a common interest in getting coins to appease the temple, keeping each other alive, and tricking new creatures into activating the curse so they can go free. They know little about each other personally, and refer to each other by number. Ten is the newest member and One is the most senior and next to leave.

The cursed usually attack travelers to steal their food and valuables, but if a traveler appears poor or desperate, the cursed may instead try to trick them into stealing from the temple. They may even knock travelers unconscious, leaving them to wake among the temple coffers. The coffers currently contain 2,917 gp, 5,240 sp, and jewelry worth 1,400 gp.

Cursed of Olidammara **CR 3**
Male and female human rogue 3
CN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7
Language Common

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Dodge
hp 10 (3 HD, 2 nonlethal damage from starvation)
Fort +0, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee shortspear +2 (1d6) or sap +2 (1d6 nonlethal)
Ranged javelin +3 (1d6)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2
Atk Options sneak attack +2d6

Abilities Str 13 (currently 11), Dex 15 (currently 13), Con 8, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1, fatigued due to starvation
Feats Acrobatic, Dodge, Persuasive
Skills Appraise +6, Bluff +10, Climb +3, Intimidate +7, Jump +5, Hide +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +7, Swim +3, Tumble +9
Possessions masterwork studded leather armor, sap, shortspear, 2 javelins, 7 gp

Nature's Judgment

The gnome ranger J'latt J'dann leads a small band of gnome rangers, druids, and their families known as Nature's Judgment, all of whom share a righteous compassion for mistreated animals.

J'latt's followers secretly patrol roads and towns, watching for animals in need of rescue. If they find an animal that is injured, fatigued, or overly restrained, they attempt to free it and take it back to their camps for treatment. The Judgment has no problem with domesticated animals as long as they are well-treated, appear content, and are not intended for slaughter. If the gnomes find an animal that is mistreated but unwilling to come with them, J'latt attempts to control the animal or lure it away. Except for a few individual members, the Judgment cares nothing for material wealth and tosses aside any saddles, bags, collars, and other items they remove from rescued animals.

J'latt and his followers avoid combat if possible, and J'latt's badger companion, Boss, does not fight unless J'latt himself is incapacitated.

J'latt J'dann **CR 5**
Male gnome ranger 5
NG Small humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Spot +5, Listen +7
Language Common, Gnome

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Dodge, +4 dodge vs. giants
hp 26 (5 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2 (+4 vs. illusions)

Spd 20 ft.
Melee *+1 gnome hooked hammer* +7 (1d6+1/x3) or *+1 gnome hooked hammer* +5 (1d6+1/x3) and *+1 gnome hooked hammer* +5 (1d4+1/x4)
Ranged composite shortbow +7 (1d4/x3)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +1
Atk Options favored enemy +4 (humanoid [human]), +2 (humanoid [orc])
Combat Gear *scroll of resist energy*
Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 2nd)
1st—*charm animal* (DC 12)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st)
1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals* (burrowing mammals only)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 16
SQ wild empathy +8
Feats Animal Affinity, Dodge, Endurance, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting
Skills Handle Animal +13, Heal +5, Hide +10, Jump +4, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Ride +8, Spot +5, Survival +9
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather, *+1 gnome hooked hammer*, composite shortbow

Boss, Badger Animal Companion: hp 7; *Monster Manual* 268.

VOLCANO!

BY F. WESLEY SCHNEIDER
BY KYLE HUNTER

First the earth trembled, then the sky rained black sludge. Amid the world-shaking explosions of fire rushed waves of burning gas, scouring the land in every direction. The blaze of elemental flame seared the sky, and for thousands of miles the remains of what was once a peaceful chain of islands rained down, reduced to nothing more than a fine gray ash.

Sound like fantasy? This catastrophe devastated the small Aegean island of Santorini approximately 3,500 years ago.

Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* presents a number of environmental perils, but few of the terrible caliber that could be called natural disasters. From Mount Doom to White Plume Mountain, volcanoes are the forges of artifacts and the altars of bloodthirsty gods, holding a special place of awe and dread in the human imagination. Presented here are several environmental encounters associated with volcanoes, ready to be unleashed at the will of wrathful deities or the angry earth.

Lava

Molten rock forced to the surface during volcanic eruptions, lava takes a variety of dangerous forms. Typically consisting of stone heated to between 700 and 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit, lava lights an area within 10 feet of it with shadowy illumination.

Lava Lake (EL 8)
Usually found within the calderas of active volcanoes, lava lakes or smaller lava pools are areas of inert superheated rock. The air within 10 feet of lava is extremely hot, and inflicts 1d6 fire damage a minute. Lava deals 2d6 fire damage per round, or 20d6 per round of total immersion. Damage from lava continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure, but this additional damage is only half that dealt during actual contact.

Lava Vent (EL 10)
Violent volcanic eruptions sometimes cause lava to break through areas of weak surface rock, creating flaming geysers dozens of feet high. A typical lava vent causes a pillar of molten rock to explode 1d4×10 feet into the air, spattering everything within a 20-foot burst. Creatures in the area take 10d6 points of fire damage (DC 18 Reflex save halves). Anyone who is damaged by the lava takes an additional 5d6 points of fire damage for the next 1d3 rounds.

Active Lava Flow (EL 11)
The nightmare of all who dwell near volcanoes, active lava flows are devastating rivers that destroy nearly everything within their path. With forms and speeds that vary greatly depending on the events that unleashed them, active lava flows spilled during an explosive volcanic eruption are typically 1d10×100 feet wide and move at a rate of 80 feet per round. They otherwise have the same effects as lava lakes.

Pyroclastic Flow (EL 16)
Also known as *nuée ardente* ("fiery cloud"), a pyroclastic flow is a wave of fluidized gas, ash, and rock particles released as part of a volcanic eruption. Such flows crash down slopes, away from volcanic vents, at speeds of up to 93 miles an hour and temperatures reaching 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit. What these devastating waves don't instantly reduce to ash they crush beneath tons of fiery, poisonous rock.

Any creature that enters a pyroclastic flow must make a DC 30 Fortitude save or instantly be disintegrated (creatures immune to fire damage are immune to this effect). If the creature succeeds, it takes 12d6 points of fire damage and an additional 8d6 points of damage from crushing debris. In addition, the creature must make another DC 25 Fortitude save or be poisoned by toxic gases (inhaled, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con). Those who manage to survive these effects are then buried beneath the flow, taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and 3d6 points of fire damage every round. If a buried creature falls unconscious, it must make a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

Even nearing a pyroclastic flow can be deadly. Any creature that comes within 100 feet of the cloud takes 2d6 points of fire damage from the incredible heat.

A small pyroclastic flow has a width of 1d10×1,000 feet and moves at a speed of 500 feet per round, although most are much larger and can move considerably faster.

Lahar (EL 14)
A lahar is a thick wave of water, ash, debris, and erupted material—a mudflow of incredible proportions. Lahars are most commonly produced by the instantaneous melting of glaciers and snowcaps atop erupting volcanic mountains.

A creature in an area affected by a lahar takes 6d6 points of damage from the force of the wave of debris and must make a DC 28 Reflex save. Those who fail are pulled beneath the surface and swept along with the lahar. Those who succeed manage to fight their way to the surface, the lahar having the consistency of quicksand. Every round, a character atop a lahar must make a DC 30 Swim check to keep from being drug below the surface, or a DC 35 Swim check to move 5 feet in whatever direction it desires. If the creature fails either of these checks by 5 or more, it sinks below the surface, is swept in the direction the lahar is moving at its current rate of travel, and risks drowning. Characters below the surface of a lahar may swim back to the surface with a successful Swim check (DC 35, +1 per consecutive round of being under the surface).

A small lahar has a width of 1d10×1,000 feet and moves at a speed of 300 feet per round, although many are much larger and can move much faster, depending on the amount of water involved and the grade of the slope it's passing over.

Geyser (EL 5)
Eruptions of steam and water are the result of fluids interacting with magma and then being violently expelled back to the surface. Geyser eruptions shoot 2d8×10 feet high, and typical steam vents affect a 10-foot spread, dealing 8d6 points of fire damage (DC 15 Reflex save half) to all creatures within the area, although a more powerful vent might affect a larger area.

Geysers of dangerous liquids and poisonous gases have also been documented in a variety of magically unstable areas and on several hostile planes, notably the instantly freezing shard geysers of the Iron Wastes (the 23rd layer of the Abyss) and Limbo's unpredictably magical "Potion Plumes." Some of these eruptions are accompanied by clouds of poisonous gases 30 feet in diameter that linger for 3 minutes after eruption (see page 297 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for a list of inhaled poisons).

Cryovolcano
In some situations, the fiery hazards posed by normal volcanoes might be replaced by deathly cold, effectively turning them into cryovolcanoes. In the cases of each of the previously detailed effects, simply replace all fire damage with cold damage. Cryovolcanoes might appear on an outgassing frozen world or as the result of incredibly powerful magic. Particularly hostile planes might also host such deadly wonders, most notably the realms that boarder the Elemental Planes of Air and Water or frozen Stygia and Cania—respectively the fifth and seventh layers of Baator. Volcanoes that inflict acid, electrical, or even sonic damage might exist in the most exotic corners of the multiverse

DOWNER 23

FOOL'S ERRAND

I've found the copper dragon Kroiph in Sigil, but something has turned his brain to mush. From his rambling, I'm able to piece together where the bigwigs are planning to crown this "god of the game". That crap is all way over my head. I just want to get my pet back and go home.

DOWNER TARANTULA, DROW

GOALKEEPER, AURUMACH RILMANI

BA'ROOSHA, GITHYANKI

BENZINGER KALRO, RAKSHASA

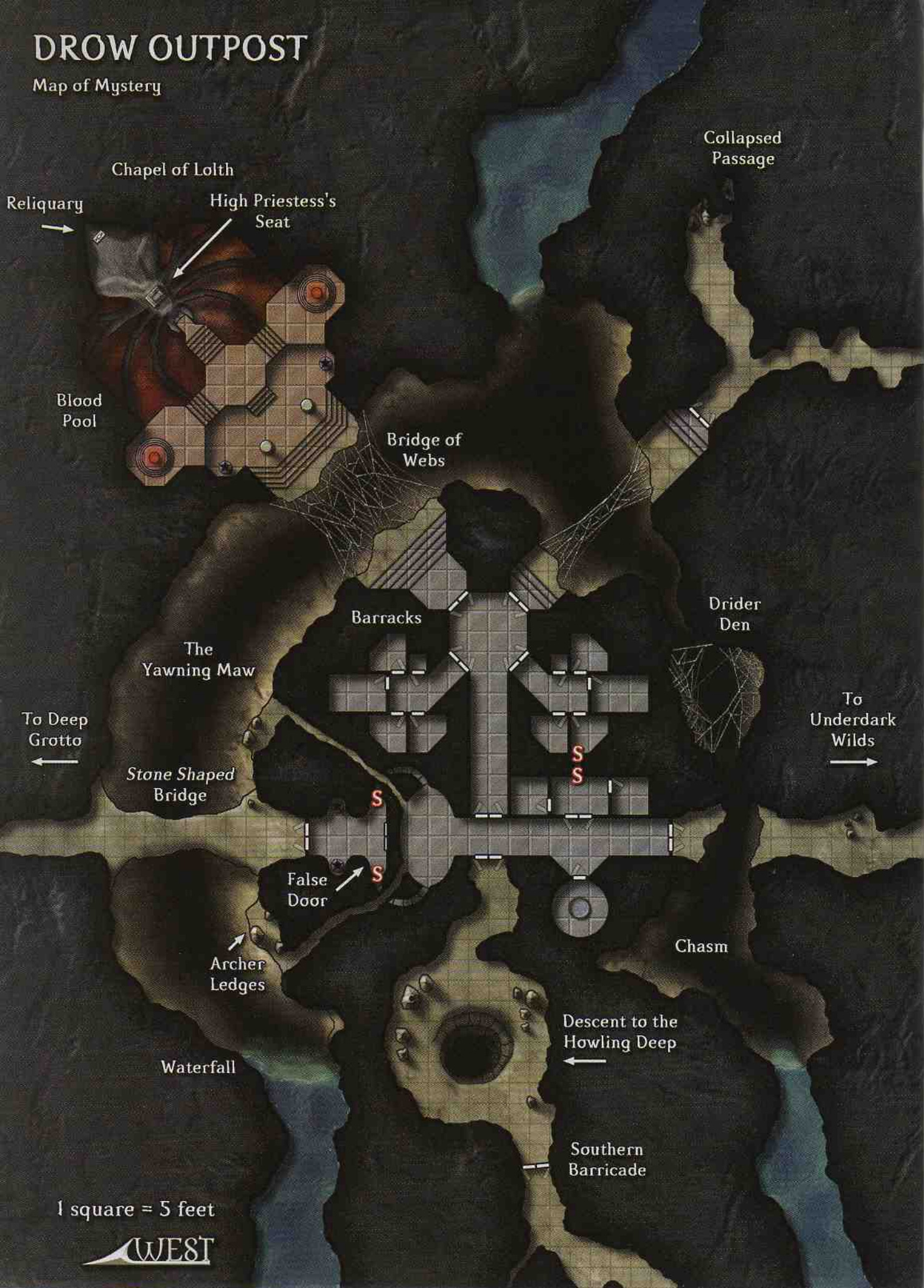
KROIPH, COPPER DRAGON

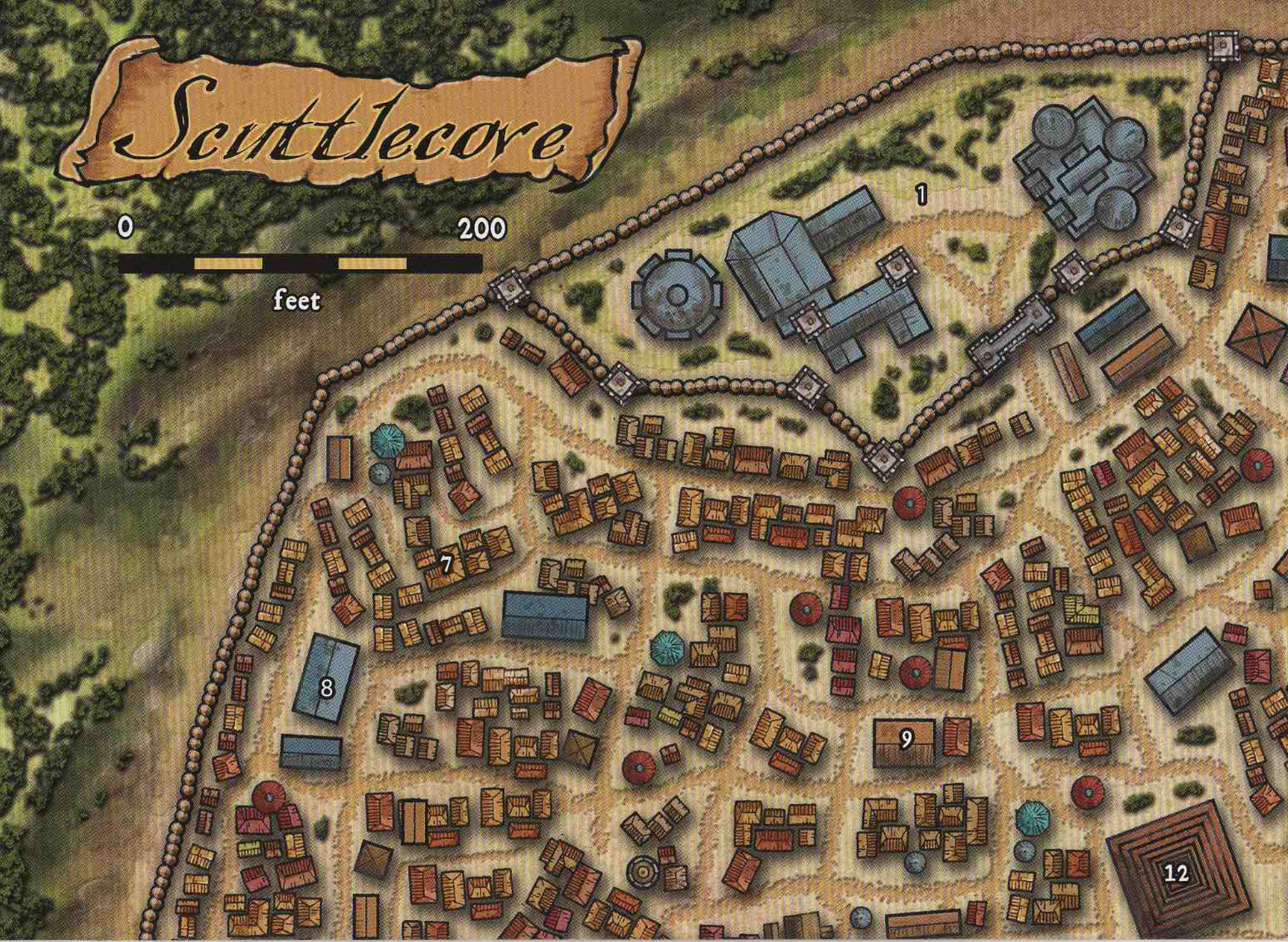
QUEEN WENCH, PAELIRYON DEVIL

MY FOREIGN FRIENDS, WHAT MIGHTY GODS HAVE YOU PURGED FROM THE MULTIVERSE?
KOSH, HALFLING GOD OF DUST? ZONTUNE, LORD OF DIVORCE? KING NAILS? NOW GAMING?

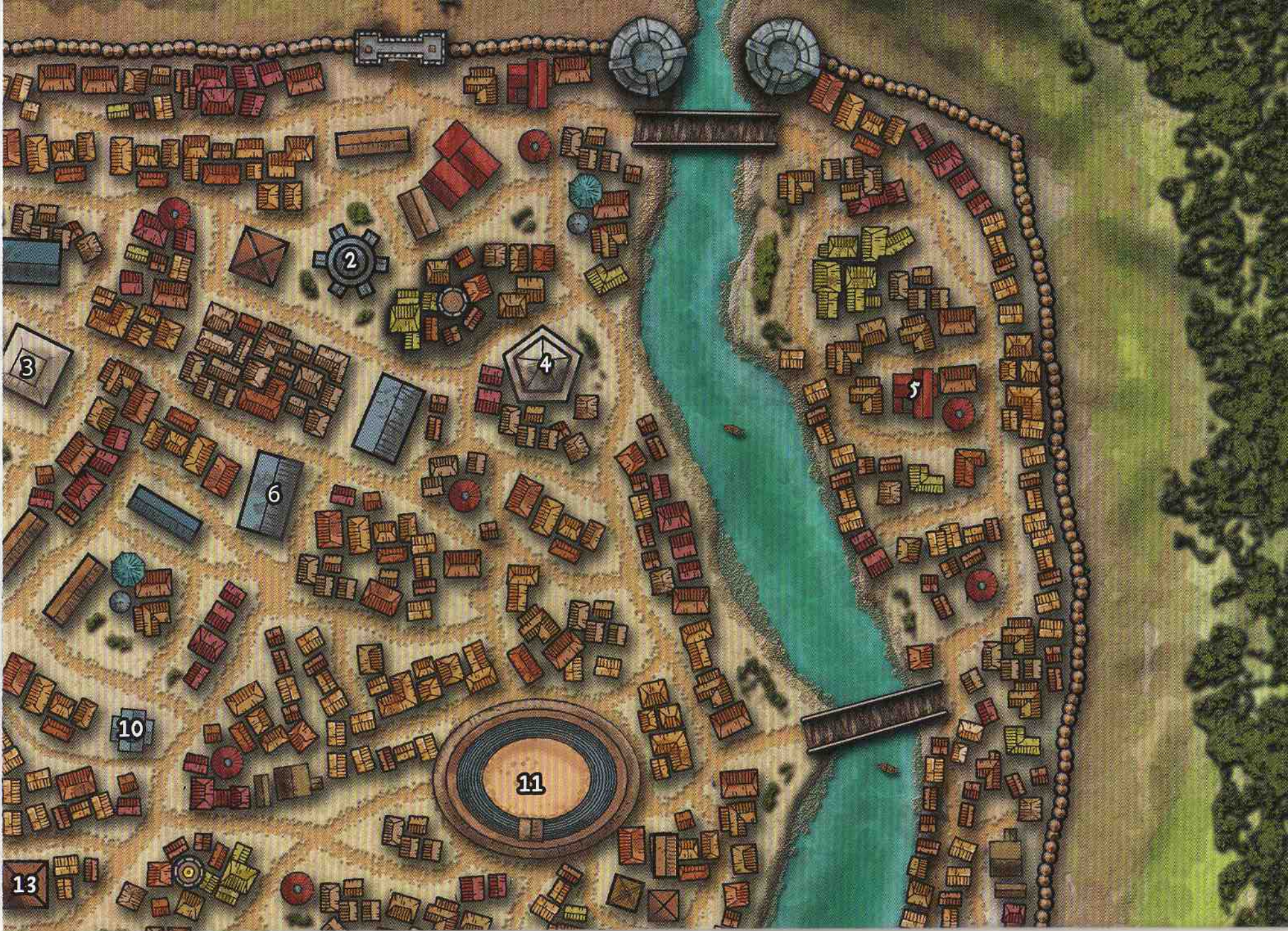
Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** Downer is ©2007 Kyle Stanley Hunter. A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**

META-GAMER! YOU NEVER INTENDED TO WIN!
I THOUGHT YOU, ESPECIALLY, WOULD APPRECIATE A TIE, GOALKEEPER.
I PROPOSE WE CALL IT A DRAW, AND WE ALL SHARE THE ULOLOK'S POWER.
RULING... RULING...
THIS IS ACCEPTABLE.
COOPERATION IS IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME.
YOU MAY ALL SHARE IN THE RITUAL.
SHORTLY...
HOLD ON ONE STINKING MINUTE!
I GOT ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR PLAYERS RIGHT HERE, AND HE AIN'T GONNA SETTLE FOR A LOUSY TIE.
I THINK THE FRISKY CRITTER WOULD STILL LIKE TO PLAY, BUT I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU FREAKS DO NOW. I'M TAKING MY ULOLOK AND GOING HOME. WHERE IS HE?
DEAR BOY, YOU'RE EATING HIM.
TO BE CONTINUED


DROW OUTPOST
Map of Mystery
Collapsed Passage
Chapel of Lolth
Reliquary
High Priestess's Seat
Blood Pool
Bridge of Webs
Barracks
Drider Den
The Yawning Maw
To Deep Grotto
To Underdark Wilds
Stone Shaped Bridge
S
S
S
S
False Door
Archer Ledges
Chasm
Descent to the Howling Deep
Waterfall
Southern Barricade
1 square = 5 feet
WEST


Scuttlecore
0
200
feet
1
7
8
9
12

© 2007 Wizards of the Coast


2
3
4
5
6
10
11
13

Noyaro River
19
20
N
nw
ne
W
E
sw
se
S
1. Scuttlecove Palace
2. Parts Is Parts
3. Skindancer Academy
4. Kedward Bone's Tower
5. The Tall House
6. Scuttlecove Orphanage
7. The Minting House
8. The Deacon's Aria
9. The Rattlebox
10. The Birdcage
11. Scuttlecove Arena
12. Plaza of Hanging Ruin
13. The Mausoleum
14. Porphyry House
15. The Rusty Shunt
16. Monastery of Dire Hunger
17. Eralakni's Emporium
18. Red Foam Whaling
19. The Violated Ogre
20. House of the Black Rider

DUNGEON #146

MAP & HANDOUT SUPPLEMENT

PRODUCED BY PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC.
PAIZO.COM

Julie Dillon

ESCAPE FROM MEENLOCK PRISON

by Tim and Eileen Connors

What was supposed to be a simple prisoner transfer grows complicated when the PCs arrive at a prison that's recently come under new management. A D&D adventure for 1st-level characters.

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Robert Lazzaretti

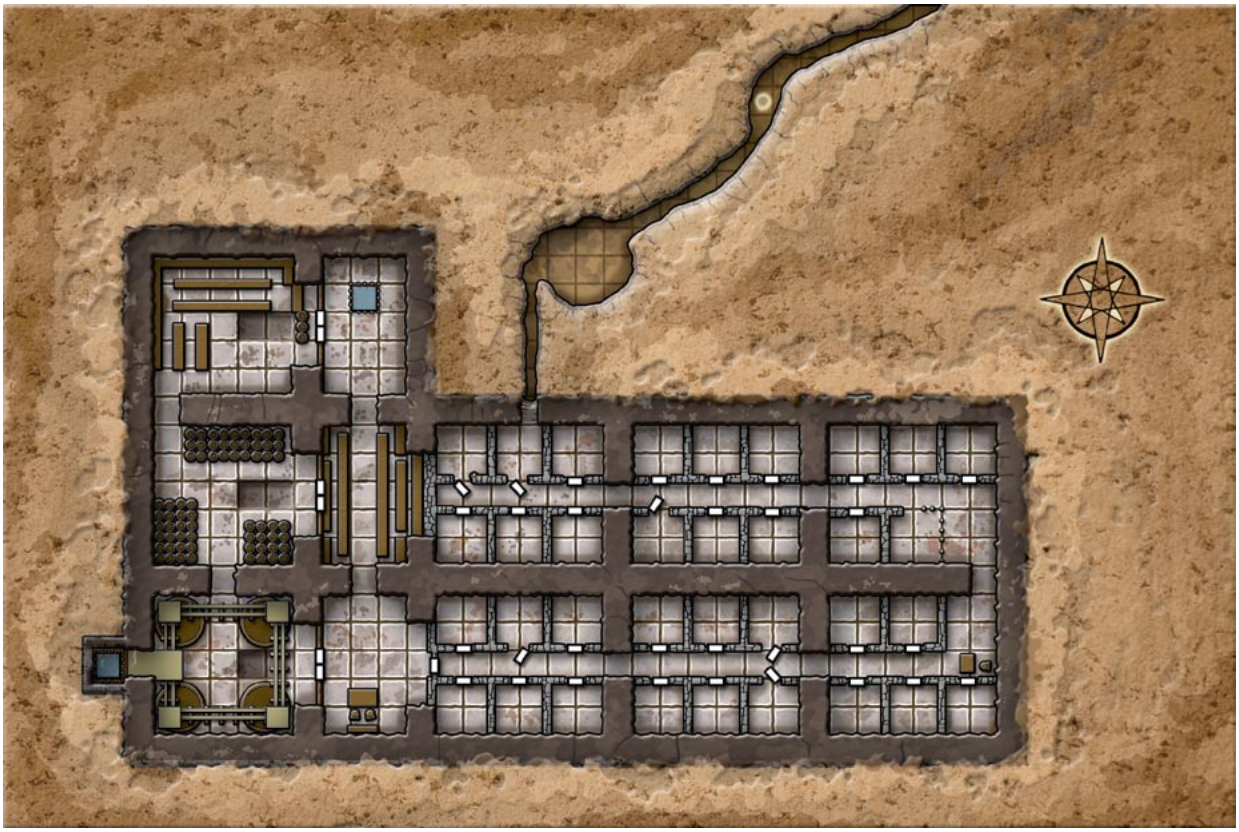
Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

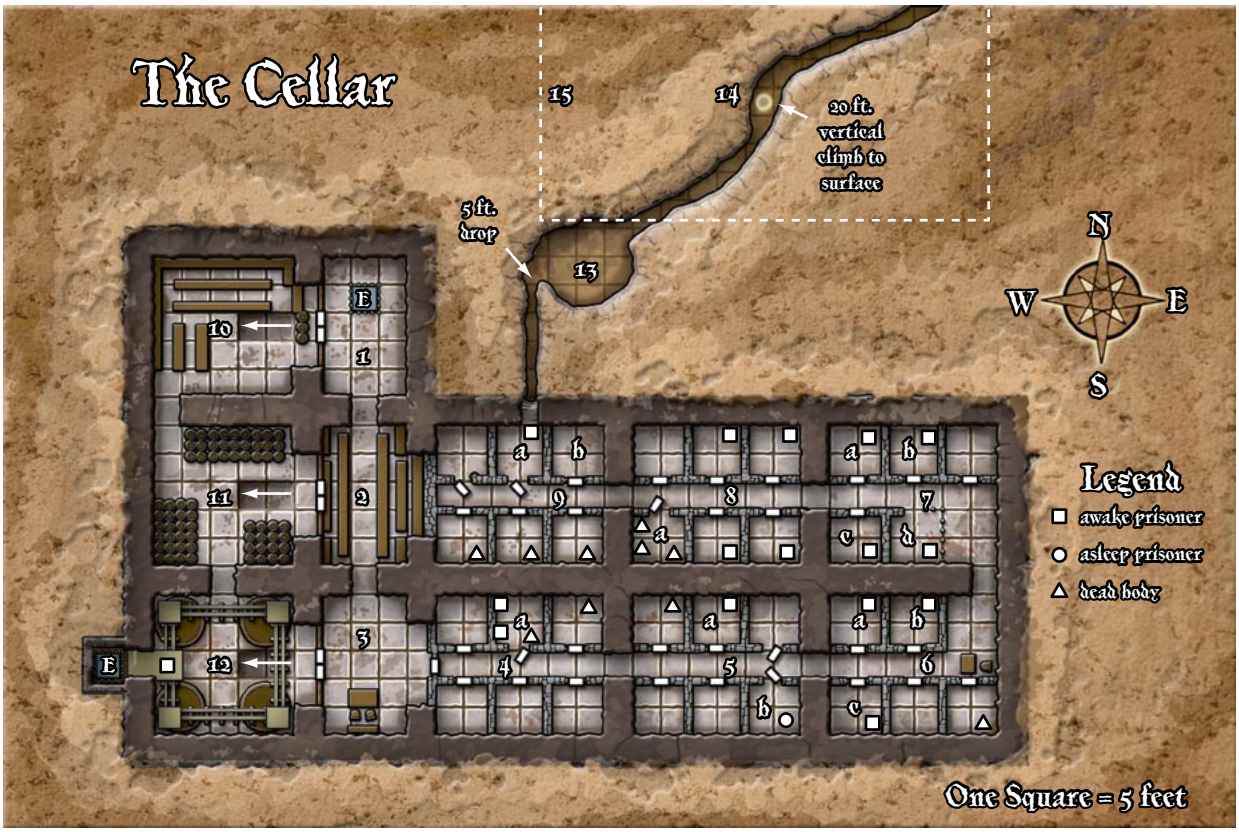
Julie Dillon

Rook

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Julie Dillon

Meenlock

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich, and Shane Law

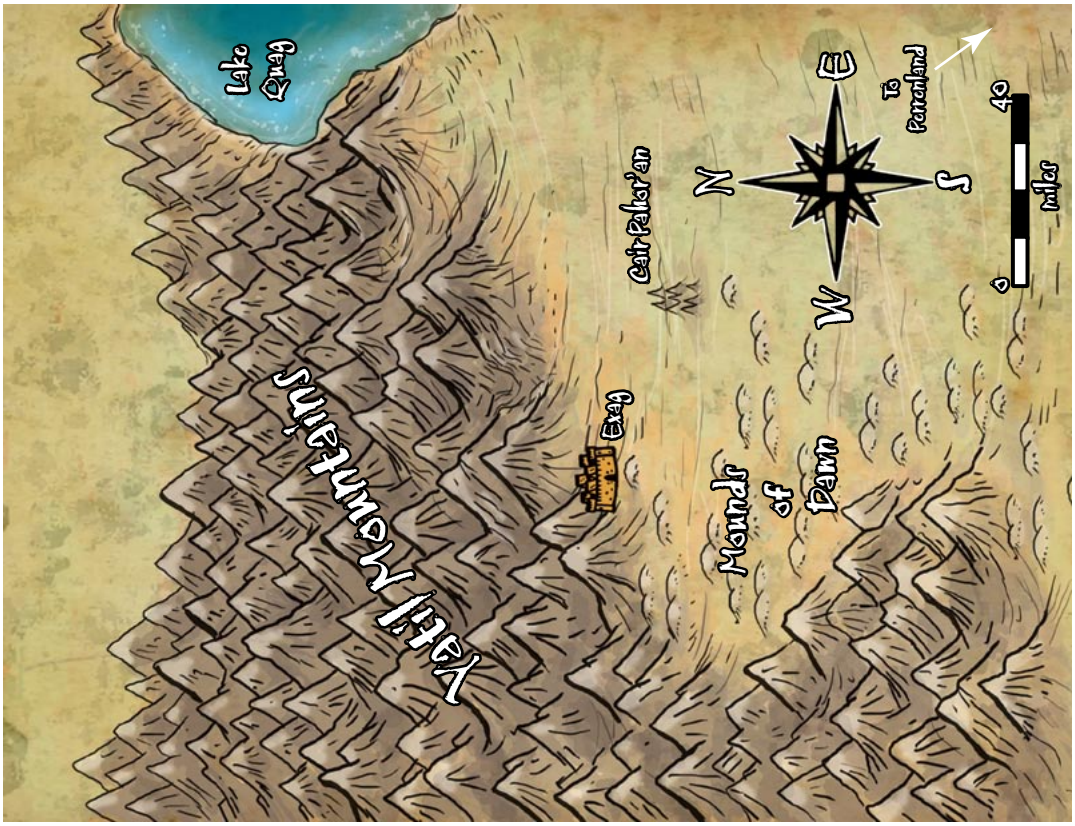
SPAWN OF SEHAN

by Tom Ganz, Stefan Happ, Stephen S. Greer, B. Matthew Conklin III, and Ashavan Doyon

Within an ancient necropolis a pool of alien slime grasps the minds and bodies of the people of Exag with wispy tendrils of madness. Those transformed by its power invariably seek the crypt, but what fell power draws them there? Part two of the Seeds of Sehan campaign arc, this is a D&D adventure for 9th-level characters.

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Rob Lazzaretti



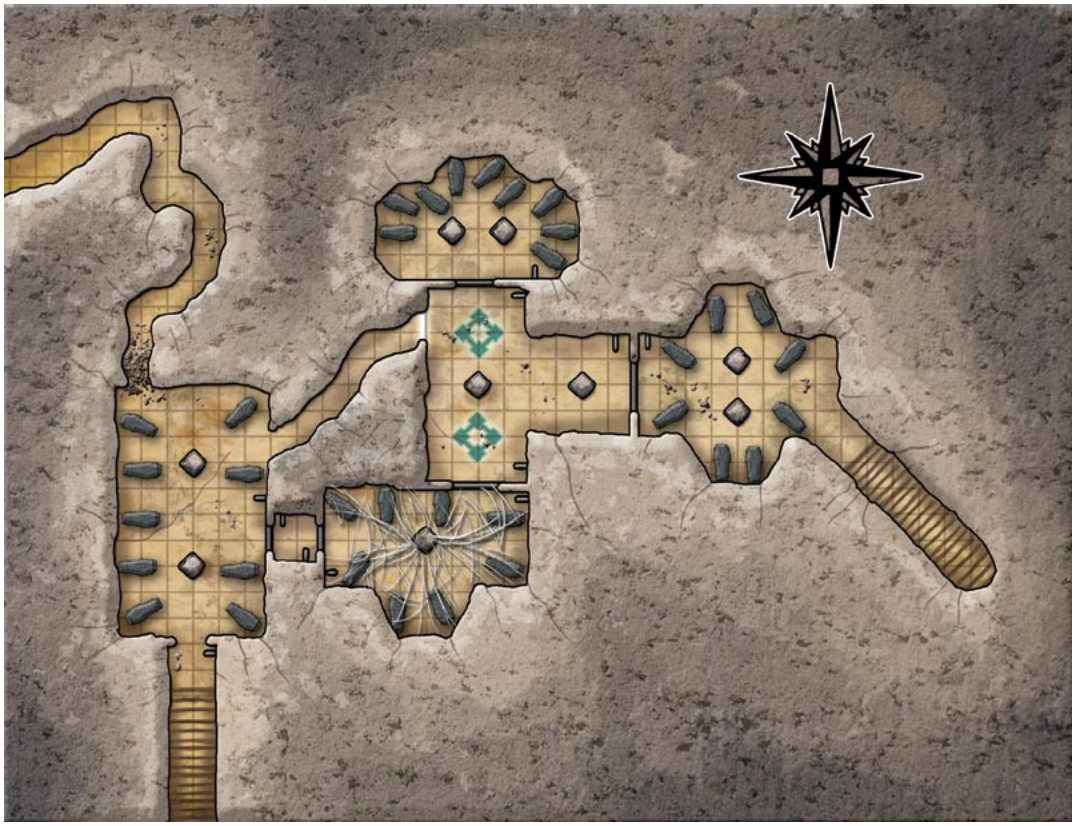
Rob Lazzaretti

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

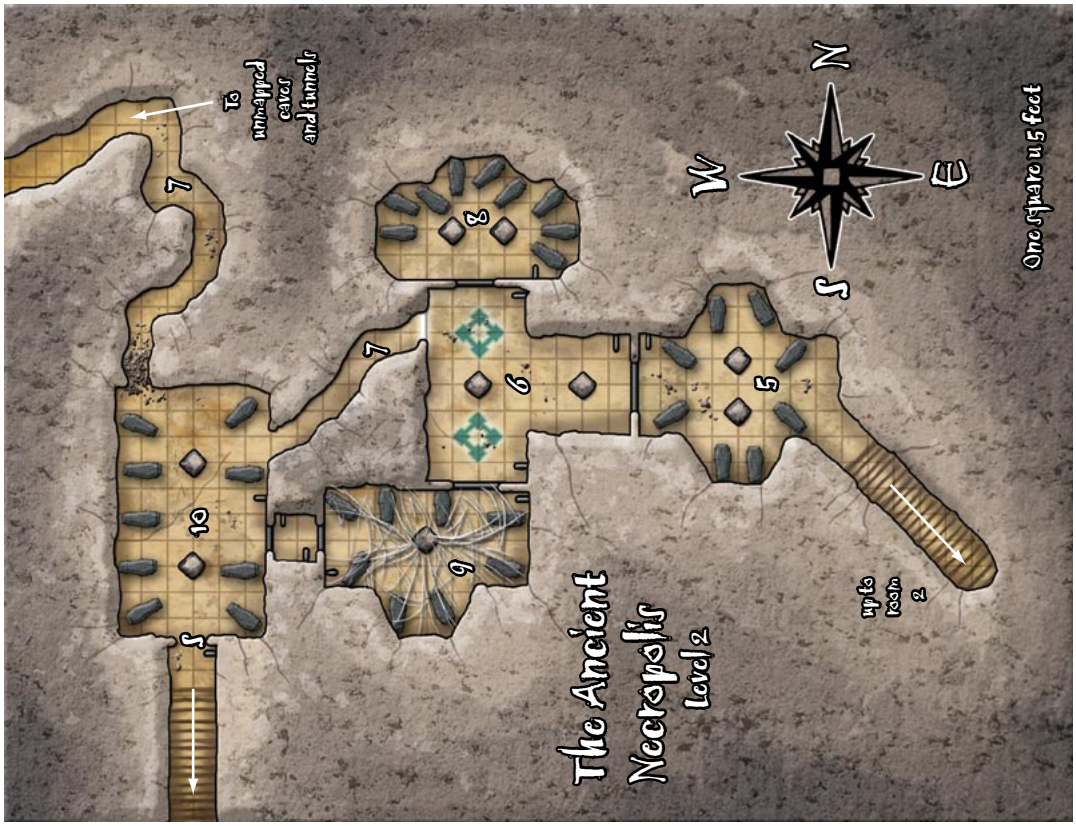
Rob Lazzaretti

Rob Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

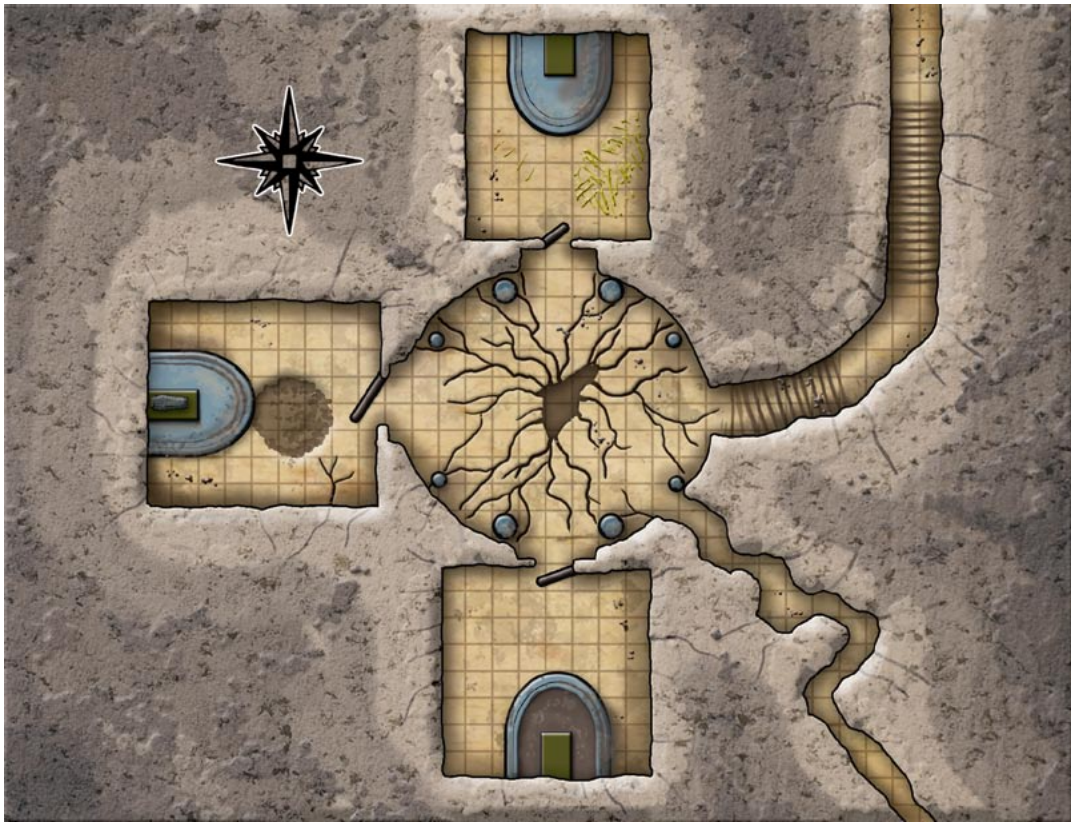


Rob Lazzaretti

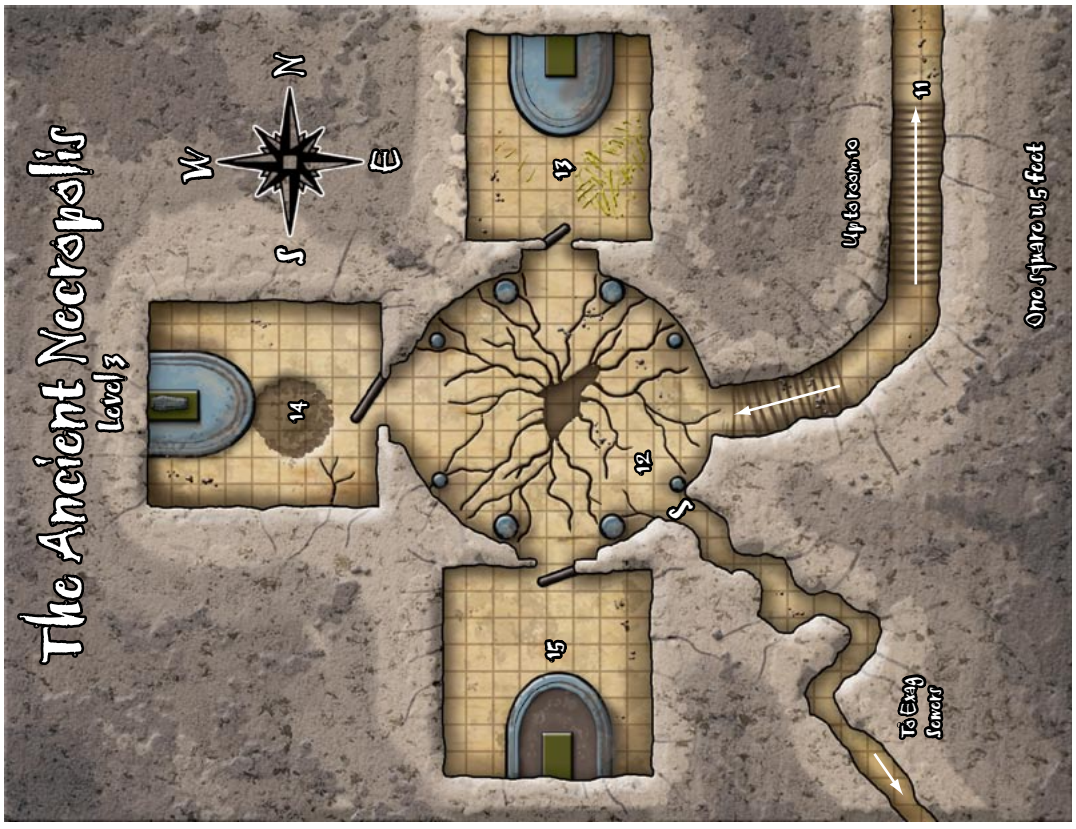


Rob Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Rob Lazzaretti



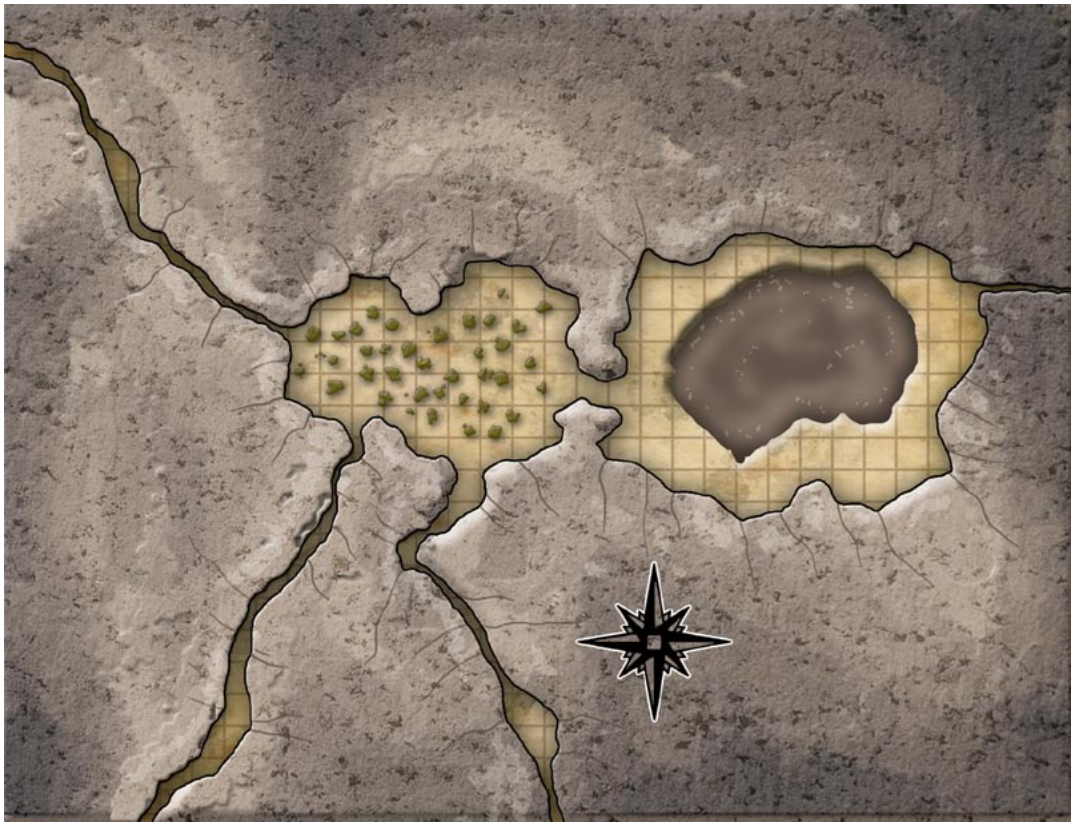
Rob Lazzaretti

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

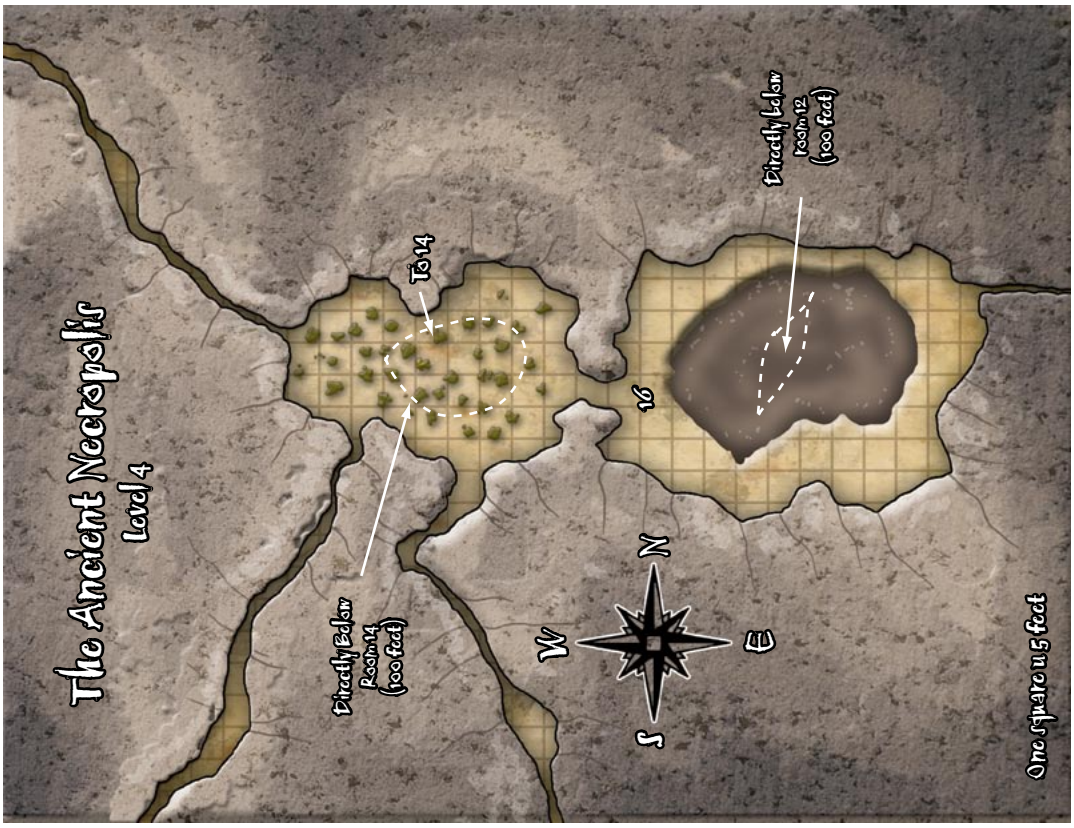
Mutated Girallon

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich, and Shane Law

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Rob Lazzaretti



Rob Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

UDON with Todd Gak, Jim Zubkavich, and Shane Law

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Ben Wootten

SERPENTS OF SCUTTLECOVE

by Richard Pett

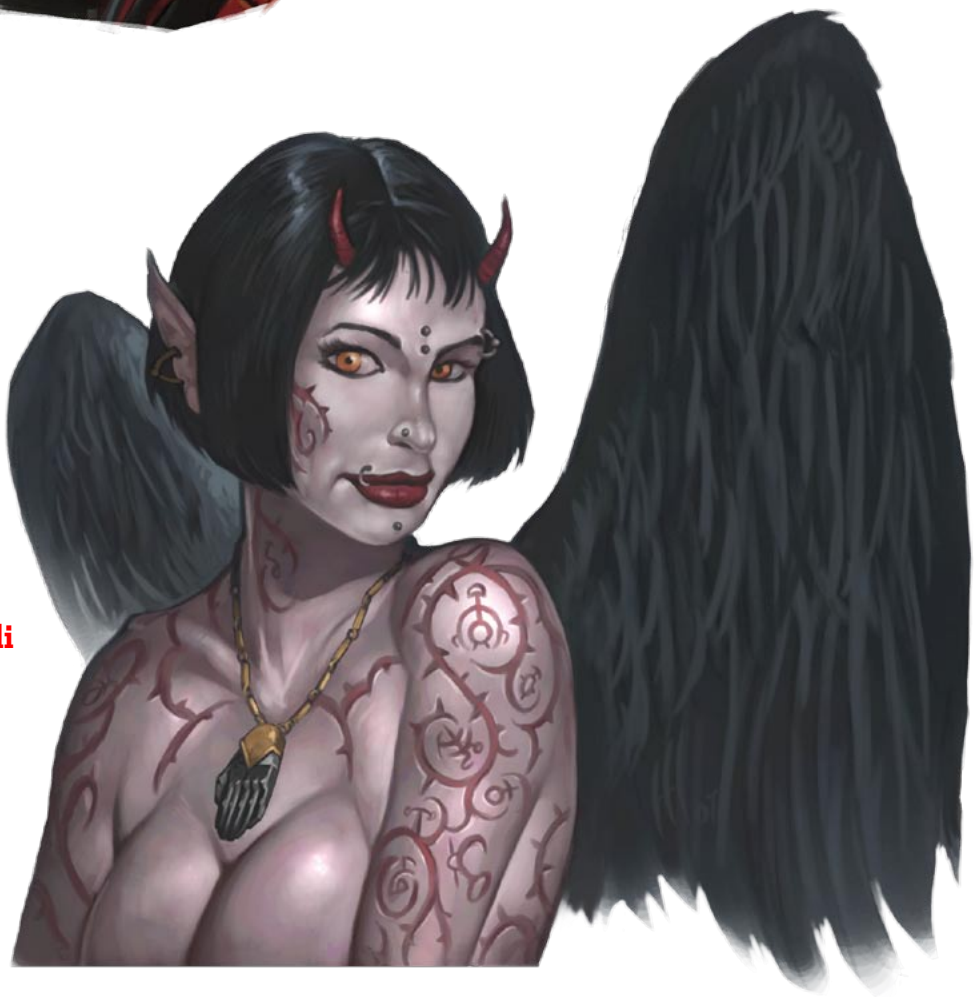
The *Sea Wyvern* sets sail for a city whose streets are more savage than the darkest jungle of the Isle of Dread. Scuttlecove awaits! A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 15th-level characters.

DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Harliss Javell

Ben Wootten

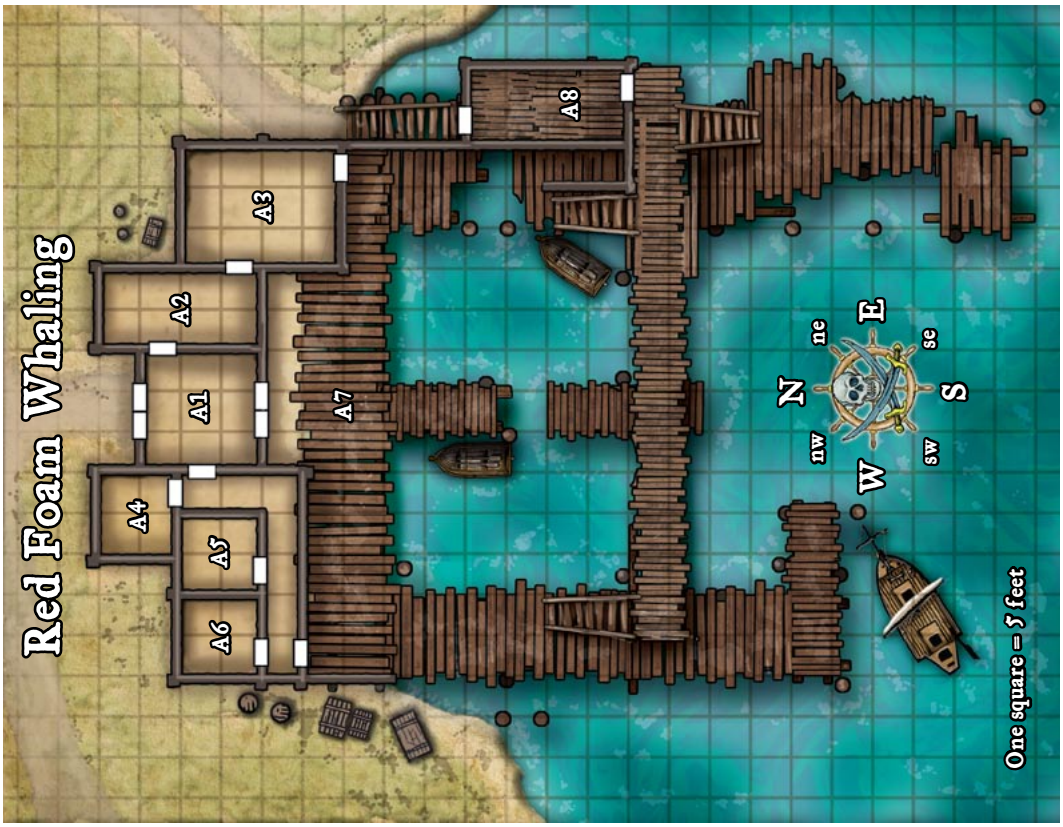
Tyralandi



Warren Mahy

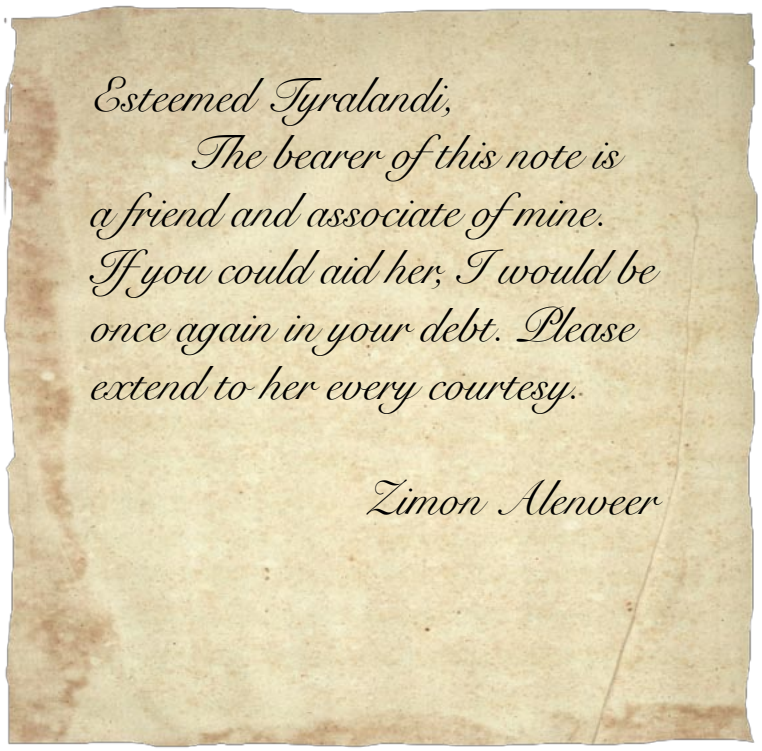
DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Rob Lazzaretti



Rob Lazzaretti

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.


Esteemed Tyralandi,
The bearer of this note is
a friend and associate of mine.
If you could aid her, I would be
once again in your debt. Please
extend to her every courtesy.
Zimon Alenweer

Handout 1

DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Rob Lazzaretti

Rob Lazzaretti

DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Harpy

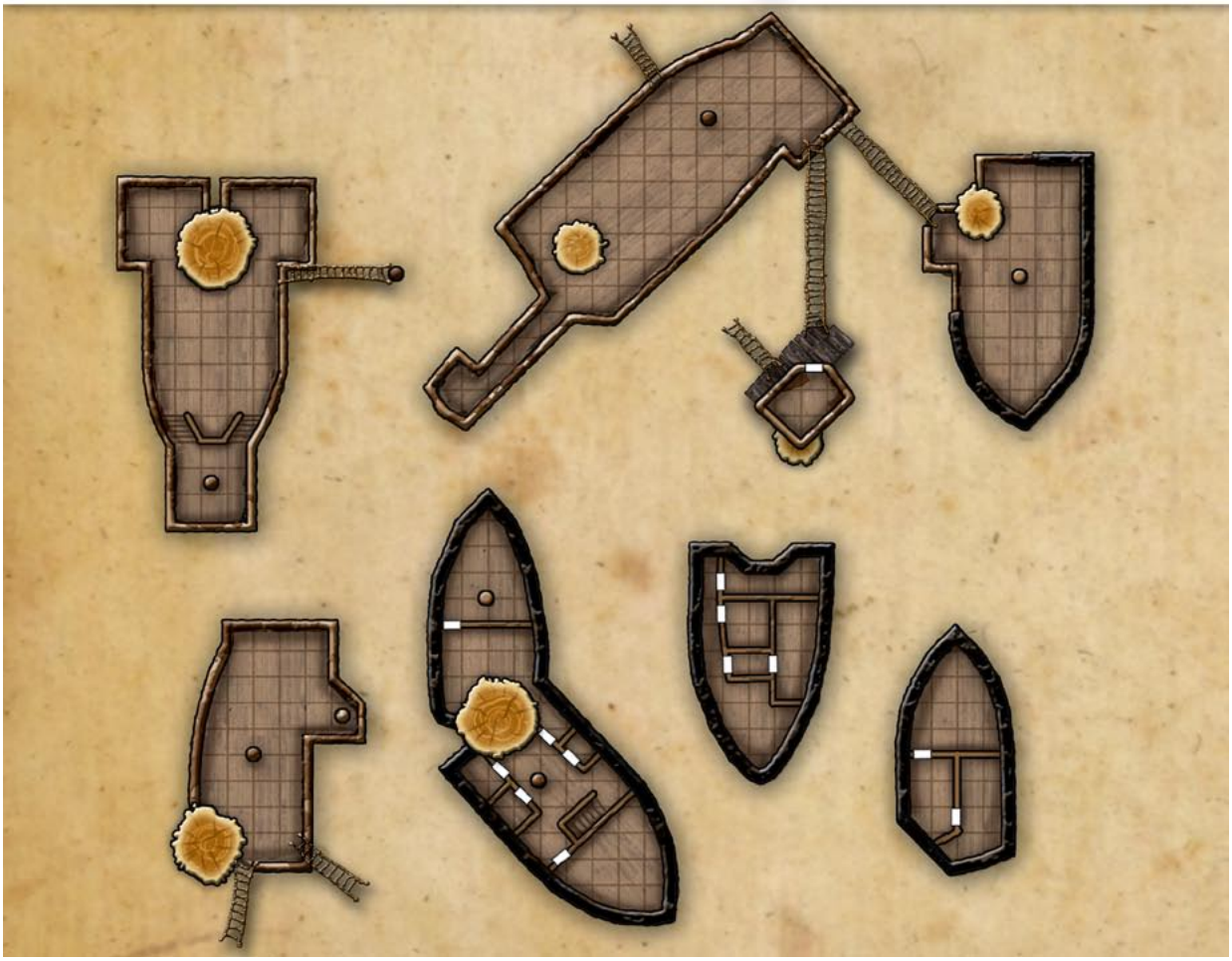
Warren Mahy

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Rob Lazzaretti

Rob Lazzaretti

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Rob Lazzaretti

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Rob Lazzaretti

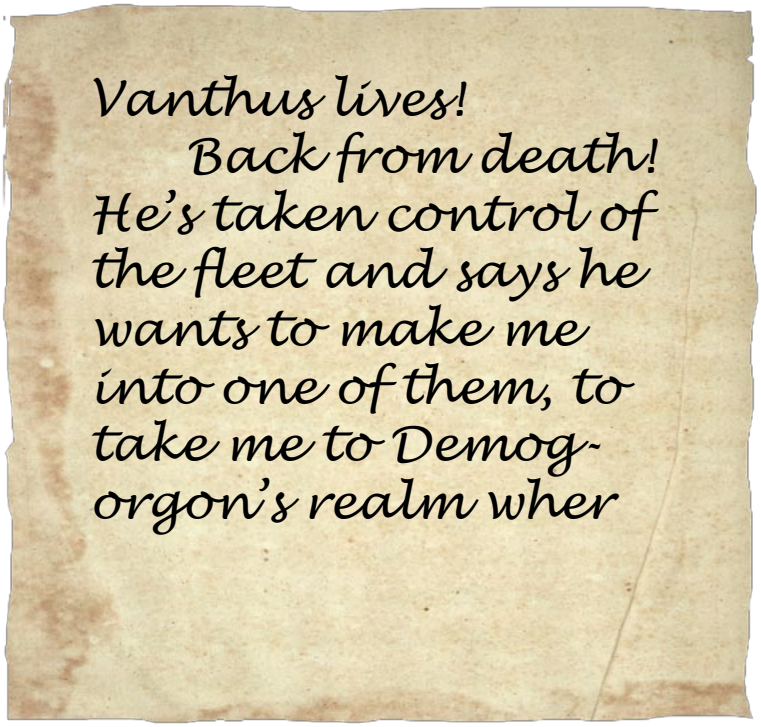
DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Ben Wootten

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Ben Wootten

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.


Vanthus lives!
Back from death!
He's taken control of the fleet and says he wants to make me into one of them, to take me to Demog-orgon's realm wher

Handout 2

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Warren Mahy

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Ben Wootten

BACKDROP: SCUTTLECOVE

by James Jacobs

Home to murderous pirates, decadent drug lords, merciless slavers, cannibalistic monks, and worse, the vile streets of Scuttlecove wait to claim their newest victims.

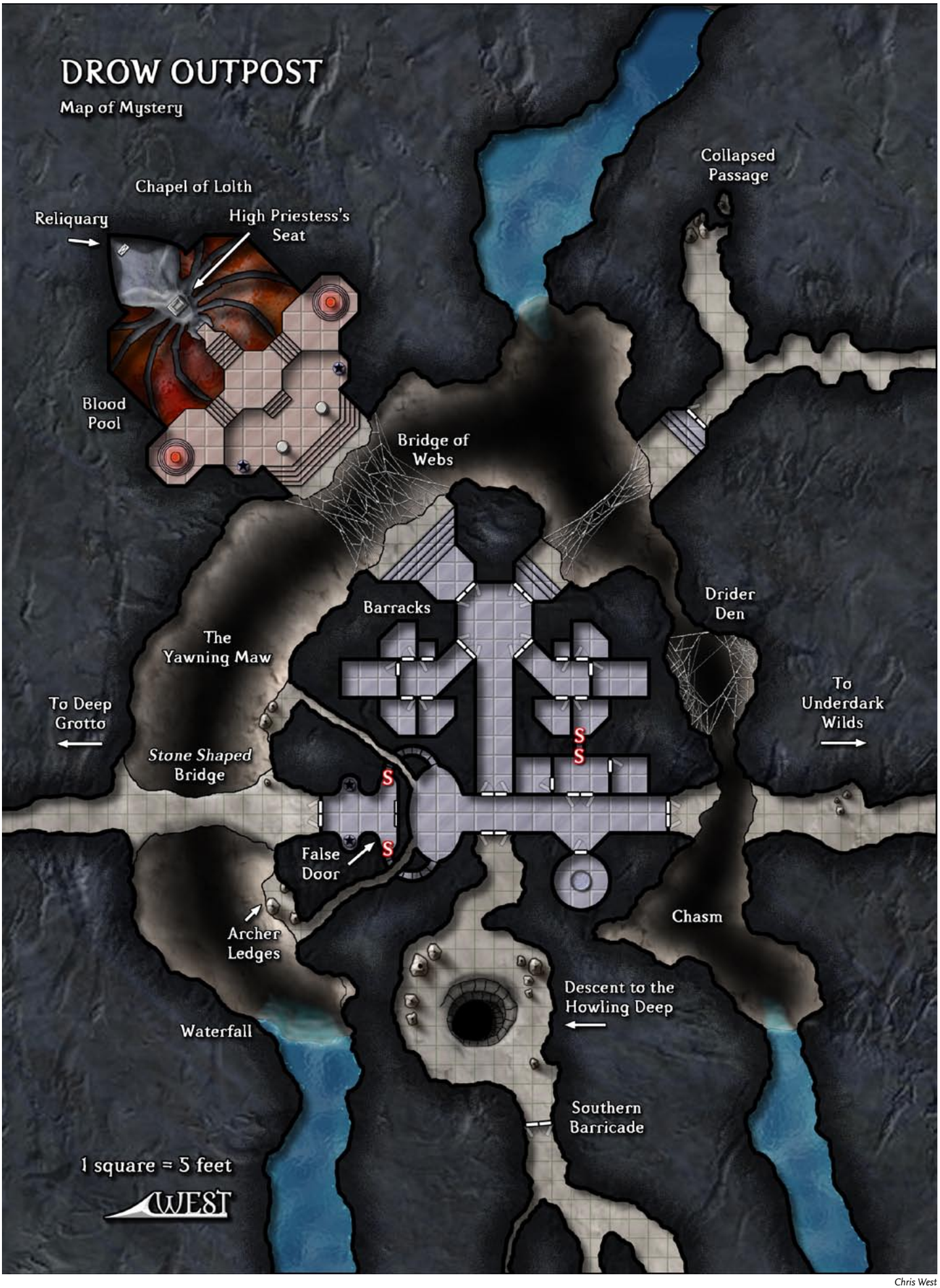
Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Warren Mahy

Kedward Bone

Ben Wootten

DUNGEON #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Chris West

Dungeon #146 Map & Handout Supplement © 2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.